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A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

PISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

BY

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ABRIDGED BY THE AUTHOR,

FOR THE USE OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS AND BIBLE-CLASSES.

TWELFTH EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM S. MARTIEN,

No. 144 CHESTNUT STREET.

1851.

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INTRODUCTION.

PAUL.

When Paul and the other apostles were called to enter upon their important duties, the world was in a deplorable and yet most interesting state. Both Heathenism and Judaism were in the last stages of decay. The polytheism of the Greeks and Romans had been carried to such an extent as to shock the common sense of mankind, and to lead the more intelligent among them openly to reject and ridicule it. This skepticism had already extended itself to the mass of the people, and become almost universal. As the transition from infidelity to superstition is certain, and generally immediate, all classes of the people were disposed to confide in dreams, enchantments, and other miserable substitutes for religion. The two reigning systems of philosophy, the Stoic and Platonic, were alike insufficient to satisfy the agitated minds of men. The former sternly repressed the best natural feelings of the soul, inculcating nothing but a blind resignation to the unalterable course of things, and promising nothing beyond an unconscious existence hereafter. The latter regarded all religions as but different forms of expressing the same general truths, and represented the whole mythological system as an allegory, as incomprehensible to the common people as the pages of a book to those who cannot read. This system promised more than it could accomplish. It excited feelings which it could not satisfy, and thus contributed to produce that general ferment which existed at this period. Among the Jews, generally, the state of things was hardly much better. They had, indeed, the form of true religion, but were in a great measure destitute of its spirit. The Pharisees were contented with the form; the Sadducees were skeptics; the Essenes were enthusiasts and mystics. Such being the state of the world, men were led to feel the need of some surer guide than either reason or tradition, and some better foundation of confidence than either heathen philosophers or Jewish sects could afford. Hence, when the glorious gospel was revealed, thousands of hearts, in all parts of the world, were prepared by the grace of God to exclaim, This is all our desire and all our salvation.

The history of the apostle Paul shows that he was prepared to act in such a state of society. In the first place, he was born and probably educated, in part, at Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia; a city almost on a level with Athens and Alexandria for its literary zeal and advantages. In one

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respect, it is said by ancient writers to have been superior to either of them. In the other cities mentioned, the majority of students were strangers, but in Tarsus they were the inhabitants themselves.* That Paul passed the early part of his life here is probable, because the trade which he was taught, in accordance with the custom of the Jews, was one peculiarly common in Cilicia. From the hair of the goats, with which that province abounded, a rough cloth was made, which was much used in the manufacture of tents. The knowledge which the apostle manifests of the Greek authors, 1 Cor. 15: 33. Tit. 1: 12, would also lead us to suppose that he had received at least part of his education in a Grecian city. Many of his characteristics, as a writer, lead to the same conclusion. He pursues far more than any other of the sacred writers of purely Jewish education, the logical method of presenting truth. There is almost always a regular concatenation in his discourses, evincing the spontaneous exercise of a disciplined mind, even when not carrying out a previous plan. His epistles, therefore, are far more logical than ordinary letters, without the formality of regular dissertations. Another characteristic of his manner is, that in discussing any question, he always presents the ultimate principle on which the decision depends. These and similar characteristics of this apostle are commonly, and probably with justice, ascribed partly to his turn of mind and partly to his early education. We learn from the Scriptures themselves, that the Holy Spirit, in employing men as his instruments in conveying truth, did not change their mental habits; he did not make Jews write like Greeks, or force all into the same mould. Each retained his own peculiarities of style and manner, and, therefore, whatever is peculiar in each, is to be referred, not to his inspiration, but to his original character and culture. While the circumstances just referred to render it probable that the apostle's habits of mind were in some measure influenced by his birth and early education in Tarsus, there are others (such as the general character of his style) which show that his residence there could not have been long, and that his education was not thoroughly Grecian. We learn from himself that he was principally educated at Jerusalem, being brought up, as he says, at the feet of Gamaliel, (Acts 22: 3.) This is the second circumstance in the providential preparation of the apostle for his work, which is worthy of notice. As Luther was educated in a Catholic seminary, and thoroughly instructed in the scholastic theology of which he was to be the great opposer, so the apostle Paul was initiated into all the doctrines and modes of reasoning of the Jews, with whom his principal controversy was to be carried on. The early adversaries of the gospel were all Jews. Even in the heathen cities they were so numerous, that it was through them and their proselytes that the church in such places was founded. We find therefore, that in almost all his epistles, the apostle contends with Jewish errorists, the corrupters of the gospel by means of Jewish doctrines. Paul, the most extensively useful of all the apostles,

* Strabo, lib. 14. ch. 5.

was thus a thoroughly educated man; a man educated with a special view to the work which he was called to perform. We find, therefore, in this, as in most similar cases, that God effects his purposes by those instruments which he has, in the ordinary course of his providence, specially fitted for their accomplishment. In the third place, Paul was converted without the intervention of human instrumentality, and was taught the gospel by immediate revelation. "I certify you, brethren," he says to the Galatians, "that the gospel which was preached of me, was not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." These circumstances are important, as he was thus placed completely on a level with the other apostles. He had seen the Lord Jesus, and could, therefore, be one of the witnesses of his resurrection; he was able to claim the authority of an original inspired teacher and messenger of God. It is obvious that he laid great stress upon this point, from the frequency with which he refers to it. He was thus furnished not only with the advantages of his early education, but with the authority and power of an apostle of Jesus Christ.

His natural character was ardent, energetic, uncompromising, and severe. How his extravagance and violence were subdued by the grace of God is abundantly evident from the moderation, mildness, tenderness, and conciliation manifested in all his epistles. Absorbed in the one object of glorifying Christ, he was ready to submit to any thing, and to yield any thing necessary for this purpose. He no longer insisted that others should think and act just as he did; so that they obeyed Christ, he was satisfied, and he willingly conformed to their prejudices and tolerated their errors, so far as the cause of truth and righteousness allowed. By his early education, by his miraculous conversion and inspiration, by his natural disposition, and by the abundant grace of God was this apostle fitted for his work, and sustained under his multiplied and arduous labours.

ORIGIN AND CONDITION OF THE CHURCH AT ROME.

One of the providential circumstances which most effectually contributed to the early propagation of Christianity, was the dispersion of the Jews among surrounding nations. They were widely scattered through the East, Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy, especially at Rome. As they were permitted, throughout the wide extent of the Roman empire, to worship God according to the traditions of their fathers, synagogues were every where established in the midst of the heathen. The apostles, being Jews, had thus every where a ready access to the people. The synagogues furnished a convenient place for regular assemblies, without attracting the attention or exciting the suspicion of the civil authorities. In these assemblies they were sure of meeting not only Jews, but the heathen also, and precisely the class of heathen best prepared for the reception of the gospel. The infinite superiority of the

pure theism of the Old Testament scriptures to any form of religion known to the ancients, could not fail to attract and convince multitudes among the pagans, wherever the Jewish worship was established. Such persons became either proselytes or "devout," that is, worshippers of the true God. Being free from the inveterate national and religious prejudices of the Jews, and at the same time convinced of the falsehood of polytheism, they were the most susceptible of all the early hearers of the gospel. It was by converts from among this class of persons, that the churches in all the heathen cities were in a great measure founded. There is abundant evidence that the Jews were very numerous at Rome, and that the class of proselytes or devout persons among the Romans was also very large. Philo says (Legatio in Caium, p. 1041, ed. Frankf.) that Augustus had assigned the Jews a large district beyond the Tiber for their residence. He accounts for their being so numerous from the fact that the captives carried thither by Pompey were liberated by their masters, who found it inconvenient to have servants who adhered so strictly to a religion which forbade constant and familiar intercourse with the heathen. Dion Cassius (lib. 60, c. 6) mentions that the Jews were so numerous at Rome that Claudius was at first afraid to banish them, but contented himself with forbidding their assembling together. That he afterwards, on account of the tumults which they occasioned, did banish them from the city, is mentioned by Suetonius (Vita Claudii, c. 25), and by Luke, Acts 18: 2. That the Jews on the death of Claudius returned to Rome, is evident from the fact that Suetonius and Dion Cassius speak of their being very numerous under the following reigns; and also from the contents of this epistle, especially the salutations in ch. 16, addressed to Jewish Christians.

That the establishment of the Jewish worship at Rome had produced considerable effect on the Romans, is clear from the statements of the heathen writers themselves. Ovid speaks of the synagogues as places of fashionable resort; Juvenal (Satire 14) ridicules his countrymen for becoming Jews; and Tacitus (Hist. lib. 5, ch. 5) refers to the presents sent by Roman proselytes to Jerusalem. The way was thus prepared for the early reception and rapid extension of Christianity in the imperial city. When the gospel was first introduced there, or by whom the introduction was effected, is unknown. Such was the constant intercourse between Rome and the provinces, that it is not surprising that some of the numerous converts to Christianity made in Judea, Asia Minor, and Greece, should at an early period find their way to the capital. It is not impossible that many, who had enjoyed the personal ministry of Christ, and believed in his doctrines, might have removed or returned to Rome, and been the first to teach the gospel in that city. Still less improbable is it, that among the multitudes present at Jerusalem at the day of Pentecost, among whom were "strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes," there were some who carried back the knowledge of the gospel. That the introduction of Christianity occurred at an early period may be

nferred not only from the probabilities just referred to, but from other circumstances. When Paul wrote this epistle, the faith of the Romans was spoken of throughout the world, which would seem to imply that the church had already been long established. Aquila and Priscilla, who left Rome on account of the decree of Claudius banishing the Jews, were probably Christians before their departure; nothing at least is said of their having been converted by the apostle. He found them at Corinth, and being of the same trade, he abode with them, and on his departure took them with him into Syria.

The tradition of some of the ancient fathers that Peter was the founder of the church at Rome is inconsistent with the statements given in the Acts of the Apostles. Irenaeus (Haeres. III. 1.) says, that "Matthew wrote his gospel, while Peter and Paul were in Rome preaching the gospel and founding the church there." And Eusebius (Chron. ad ann. 2 Claudii) says, "Peter having founded the church at Antioch, departed for Rome, preaching the gospel." Both these statements are incorrect. Peter did not found the church at Antioch, nor did he and Paul preach together at Rome. That Peter was not at Rome prior to Paul's visit appears from the entire silence of this epistle on the subject; and from no mention being made of the fact in any of the letters written from Rome by Paul during his imprisonment. The tradition that Peter ever was at Rome rests on very uncertain authority. It is first mentioned by Dionysius of Corinth in the latter half of the second century, and from that time it seems to have been generally received. The account is in itself improbable, as Peter's field of labour was in the east, about Babylon; and as the statement of Dionysius is full of inaccuracies. He makes Peter and Paul the founders of the church at Corinth, and makes the same assertion regarding the church at Rome, neither of which is true. He also says that Paul and Peter suffered martyrdom at the same time at Rome, which, from the silence of Paul respecting Peter during his last imprisonment, is in the highest degree improbable. History, therefore, has left us ignorant of the time when this church was founded, and the persons by whom the work was effected.

The condition of the congregation may be inferred from the circumstances already mentioned, and from the drift of the apostle's letter. As the Jews and proselytes were very numerous at Rome, the early converts as might be expected, were from both these classes. The latter, however, seem greatly to have predominated, because we find no such evidence of a tendency to Judaism as is supposed in the epistle to the Galatians. Paul nowhere seems to apprehend that the church at Rome would apostatize as the Galatian Christians had already done. And in chapters 14 and 15, his exhortations imply that the Gentile party were more in danger of oppressing the Jewish, than the reverse. Paul, therefore, writes to them as Gentiles (ch. 1: 13), and claims, in virtue of his office as apostle of the Gentiles, the right to address them with all freedom and authority (15: 16). The congregation, however, was not composed

exclusively of this class; many converts, originally Jews, were included in their numbers, and those belonging to the other class were more or less under the influence of Jewish opinions. The apostle, therefore, in this, as in all his other epistles addressed to congregations similarly situated, refutes those doctrines of the Jews which were inconsistent with the gospel, and answers those objections, which they and those under their influence were accustomed to urge against it. These different elements of the early churches were almost always in conflict, both as to points of doctrine and discipline. The Jews insisted, to a greater or less extent, on their peculiar privileges and customs, and the Gentiles disregarded, and at times despised the scruples and prejudices of their weaker brethren. The opinions of the Jews particularly controverted in this epistle are, 1. That connexion with Abraham by natural descent and by the bond of circumcision, together with the observance of the law, is sufficient to secure the favour of God. 2. That the blessings of the Messiah's reign were to be confined to Jews and those who would consent to become proselytes. 3. That subjection to heathen magistrates was inconsistent with the dignity of the people of God, and with their duty to the Messiah as king. There are clear indications in other parts of Scripture, as well as in their own writings, that the Jews placed their chief dependence upon the covenant of God with Abraham, and the peculiar rites and ordinances connected with it. Our Saviour, when speaking to the Jews, tells them, "Say not, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Luke 3: 8. It is clearly implied in this passage, that the Jews supposed, that to have Abraham as their father was sufficient to secure the favour of God. The Rabbins taught that God had promised Abraham that his descendants, though wicked, should be saved on account of his merit. Justin Martyr mentions this as the ground of confidence of the Jews in his day. "Your Rabbins," he says, "deceive themselves and us in supposing that the kingdom of heaven is prepared for all those who are the natural seed of Abraham, even though they be sinners and unbelievers." (*Dialogue with Trypho.*) They were accustomed to say, "Great is the virtue of circumcision; no circumcised person enters hell." And one of their standing maxims was, "All Israel hath part in eternal life."

The second leading error of the Jews was a natural result of the one just referred to. If salvation was secured by connexion with Abraham, then none who were not united to their great ancestor could be saved. There is no opinion of the Jews more conspicuous in the sacred writings, than that they were greatly superior to the Gentiles, that the theocracy and all its blessings belonged to them, and that others could attain even an inferior station in the kingdom of the Messiah only by becoming Jews.

The indisposition of the Jews to submit to heathen magistrates arose partly from their high ideas of their own dignity and their contempt for other nations, partly from their erroneous opinions of the nature

of the Messiah's kingdom, and partly, no doubt, from the peculiar hardships and oppressions to which they were exposed. The prevalence of this indisposition among them is proved by its being a matter of discussion whether it was even lawful to pay tribute to Caesar; by their assertion that, as Abraham's seed, they were never in bondage to any man; and by their constant tumults and rebellions, which led first to their banishment from Rome, and, finally, to the utter destruction of their city. The circumstances of the church at Rome, composed of both Jewish and Gentile converts; surrounded by Jews who still insisted on the necessity of circumcision, of legal obedience, and of connexion with the family of Abraham in order to salvation, and disposed on many points to differ among themselves; sufficiently account for the character of this epistle.

TIME AND PLACE OF ITS COMPOSITION.

There are no sufficient data for fixing accurately and certainly the chronology of the life and writings of the apostle Paul. It is therefore, in most cases, only by a comparison of various circumstances that an approximation to the date of the principal events of his life can be made. With regard to this epistle, it is plain, from its contents, that it was written just as Paul was about to set out on his last journey to Jerusalem. In the fifteenth chapter he says that the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia had made a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem, and that he was on the eve of his departure for that city (v. 25). This same journey is mentioned in Acts 20, and occurred most probably in the spring (see Acts 20 : 16) of the year 58 or 59. This date best suits the account of his long imprisonment, first at Cesarea and then at Rome, of four years, and his probable liberation in 62 or 63. His subsequent labours and second imprisonment would fill up the intervening period of two or three years to the date of his martyrdom, towards the close of the reign of Nero. That this epistle was written from Corinth appears from the special recommendation of Phebe, a deaconess of the neighbouring church, who was probably the bearer of the letter (ch. 16 : 1); from the salutations of Erastus and Gaius, both residents of Corinth, to the Romans (ch. 16 : 23); compare 2 Tim. 4 : 20, and 1 Cor. 1 : 14; and from the account given in Acts 20 : 2, 3, of Paul's journey through Macedoni into Greece, before his departure for Jerusalem, for the purpose of carrying the contributions of the churches for the poor in that city.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

That this epistle was written by the apostle Paul, admits of no reasonable doubt. 1. It in the first place purports to be his. It bears his signature, and speaks throughout in his name. 2. It has uniformly been recognised as his. From the apostolic age to the present time it has been referred to and quoted by a regular series of authors, and

recognised as of divine authority in all the churches. It would be requisite, in order to disprove its authenticity, to account satisfactorily for these facts, on the supposition of the epistle being spurious. The passages in the early writers, in which this epistle is alluded to or cited, are very numerous, and may be seen in Lardner's *Credibility*, Vol. II. 3. The internal evidence is no less decisive in its favour. (*a*) In the first place, it is evidently the production of a Jew, familiar with the Hebrew text and the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, because the language and style are such as no one, not thus circumstanced, could adopt; and because the whole letter evinces such an intimate acquaintance with Jewish opinions and prejudices. (*b*) It agrees perfectly in style and manner with the other epistles of this apostle. (*c*) It is, in the truth and importance of its doctrines, and in the elevation and purity of its sentiments, immeasurably superior to any uninspired production of the age in which it appeared. A comparison of the genuine apostolic writings with the spurious productions of the first and second centuries, affords one of the strongest collateral evidences of the authenticity and inspiration of the former. (*d*) The incidental or undesigned coincidences, as to matters of fact, between this epistle and other parts of the New Testament, are such as to afford the clearest evidence of its having proceeded from the pen of the apostle. Compare Rom. 15 : 25—31 with Acts 20 : 2, 3. 24 : 17. 1 Cor. 16 : 1—4. 2 Cor. 8 : 1—4. 9 : 2. Rom. 16 : 21—23 with Acts 20 : 4. Rom. 16 : 3, et seqq. with Acts 18 : 2, 18 —26. 1 Cor. 16 : 19, &c. (see Paley's Horæ Paulinæ.) 4. Besides these positive proofs, there is the important negative consideration, that there are no grounds for questioning its authenticity. There are no discrepancies between this and other sacred writings; no counter testimony among the early fathers; no historical or critical difficulties which must be solved before it can be recognised as the work of Paul. There is, therefore, no book in the Bible, and there is no ancient book in the world, of which the authenticity is more certain than that of this epistle.

ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

The epistle consists of three parts. The first, which includes the first eight chapters, is occupied in the discussion of the doctrine of justification and its consequences. The second, embracing chapters 9, 10, 11, treats of the calling of the Gentiles, the rejection and future conversion of the Jews. The third consists of practical exhortations and salutations to the Christians at Rome.

The first part the apostle commences by saluting the Roman Christians, commending them for their faith, and expressing his desire to see them, and his readiness to preach the gospel at Rome. This readiness was founded on the conviction that the gospel revealed the only method by which men can be saved, viz. by faith in Jesus Christ, and this me-

thod is equally applicable to all mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews, ch. 1 : 1—17. Paul thus introduces the two leading topics of the epistle.

In order to establish his doctrine respecting justification, he first proves that the Gentiles cannot be justified by their own works, ch. 1 : 18—39; and then establishes the same position in reference to the Jews, ch. 2. 3 : 1—20. Having thus shown that the method of justification by works was unavailable for sinners, he unfolds that method which is taught in the gospel, ch. 3 : 21—31. The truth and excellence of this method he confirms in chs. 4th and 5th. The obvious objection to the doctrine of gratuitous acceptance, that it must lead to the indulgence of sin, is answered, and the true design and operation of the law are exhibited in chs. 6th and 7th; and the complete security of all who confide in Christ is beautifully unfolded in ch. 8.

In arguing against the Gentiles, Paul assumes the principle that God will punish sin, ch. 1 : 18, and then proves that they are justly chargeable both with impiety and immorality, because, though they possessed a competent knowledge of God, they did not worship him, but turned unto idols, and gave themselves up to all kinds of iniquity, ch. 1 : 19—32.

He commences his argument with the Jews by expanding the general principle of the divine justice, and especially insisting on God's impartiality by showing that he will judge all men, Jews and Gentiles, according to their works, and according to the light they severally enjoyed, ch. 2 : 1—16. He shows that the Jews, when tried by these rules, are as justly and certainly exposed to condemnation as the Gentiles, ch. 2 : 17—29.

The peculiar privileges of the Jews afford no ground of hope that they will escape being judged on the same principles with other men, and when thus judged they are found to be guilty before God. All men, therefore, are, as the Scriptures abundantly teach, under condemnation, and, consequently, cannot be justified by their own works, ch. 3 : 1—20.

The gospel proposes the only method by which God will justify men; a method which is entirely gratuitous; the condition of which is faith; which is founded on the redemption of Christ; which reconciles the justice and mercy of God, humbles man, lays the foundation for a universal religion, and establishes the law, ch. 3 : 21—31.

The truth of this doctrine is evinced from the example of Abraham, the testimony of David, the nature of the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, and from the nature of the law. He proposes the conduct of Abraham as an example and encouragement to Christians, ch. 4 : 1—25.

Justification by faith in Christ secures peace with God, present joy, and the assurance of eternal life, ch. 5 : 1—11. The method, therefore, by which God proposes to save sinners, is analogous to that by which they were first brought under condemnation. As on account of the offence of one, sentence has passed on all men to condemnation; so on accoun of the righteousness of one, all are justified, ch. 5 : 12—21.

The doctrine of the gratuitous justification of sinners cannot lead to the indulgence of sin, because such is the nature of union with Christ and such the object for which he died, that all who receive the benefits of his death experience the sanctifying influence of his life, ch. 6: 1—11 Besides, the objection in question is founded on a misapprehension of the effect and design of the law, and of the nature of sanctification. Deliverance from the bondage of the law and from a legal spirit is essential tc holiness. When the Christian is delivered from this bondage, he becomes the servant of God, and is brought under an influence which effectually secures his obedience, ch. 6: 12—23.

As, therefore, a woman, in order to be married to a second husband, must first be freed from her former one, so the Christian, in order to be united to Christ and to bring forth fruit unto God, must first be freed from the law, ch. 7: 1—6.

This necessity of deliverance from the law, does not arise from the fact that the law is evil, but from the nature of the case. The law is but the authoritative declaration of duty; which cannot alter the state of the sinner's heart. Its real operation is to produce the conviction of sin (vs. 7—13), and, in the renewed mind, to excite approbation and complacency in the excellence which it exhibits, but it cannot effectually secure the destruction of sin. This can only be done by the grace of God in Jesus Christ, ch. 7: 7—25.

Those who are in Christ, therefore, are perfectly safe. They are freed from the law; they have the indwelling of the life-giving Spirit; they are the children of God; they are chosen, called, and justified according to the divine purpose; and they are the objects of the unchanging love of God, ch. 8: 1—39.

The second part of the epistle relates to the persons to whom the blessings of Christ's kingdom may properly be offered, and the purposes of God respecting the Jews. In entering upon this subject, the apostle, after assuring his kindred of his affection, establishes the position that God has not bound himself to regard as his children all the natural descendants of Abraham, but is at perfect liberty to choose whom he will to be heirs of his kingdom. The right of God to have mercy on whom he will have mercy, he proves from the declarations of Scripture and from the dispensations of his providence. He shows that this doctrine of the divine sovereignty is not inconsistent with the divine character or man's responsibility, because God simply chooses from among the undeserving whom he will as the objects of his mercy, and leaves others to the just recompense of their sins, ch. 9: 1—24.

God accordingly predicted of old that he would call the Gentiles and reject the Jews. The rejection of the Jews was on account of their unbelief, ch. 9: 25—33. 10: 1—5. The two methods of justification are then contrasted, for the purpose of showing that the legal method is impracticable, but that the method proposed in the gospel is simple and

easy, and adapted to all men. It should, therefore, agreeably to the revealed purpose of God, be preached to all men, ch. 10 : 6—21.

The rejection of the Jews is not total; many of that generation were brought into the church, who were of the election of grace, ch. 11 : 1—10. Neither is this rejection final. There is to be a future and general conversion of the Jews to Christ, and thus all Israel shall be saved, ch. 11 : 11—36.

The third or practical part of the epistle, consists of directions, first, as to the general duties of Christians in their various relations to God, ch. 12; secondly, as to their political or civil duties, ch. 13; and, thirdly, as to their ecclesiastical duties, or those duties which they owe to each other as members of the church, ch. 14. 15 : 1—13.

The epistle concludes with some account of Paul's labours and purposes, ch. 15 : 14—33, and with the usual salutations, ch. 16.

COMMENTARY ON THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.

THIS chapter consists of two parts. The first extends to the close of v. 17, and contains the general introduction to the epistle. The second commences with v. 18, and extends to the close of the chapter: it contains the argument of the apostle to prove that the declaration contained in vs. 16, 17, that justification can only be obtained by faith, is true with regard to the heathen.

CHAP. 1: 1—17.

[1]Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, [2](which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) [3]concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, [4]and declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: [5]by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: [6]among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: [7]to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. [8]First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. [9]For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; [10]making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. [11]For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; [12]that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. [13]Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. [14]I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. [15]So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. [16]For I am not ashamed of the gospel

of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

ANALYSIS.

This section consists of two parts. The first, from v. 1 to 7 inclusive is a salutatory address; the second, from v. 8 to 17, is the introduction to the epistle. Paul commences by announcing himself as a divinely commissioned teacher, set apart to the preaching of the gospel, v. 1. Of this gospel, he says, 1. That it was promised, and of course partially exhibited in the Old Testament, v. 2. 2. That its great subject was Jesus Christ, v. 3. Of Christ he says, that he was, as to his human nature, the Son of David; but as to his divine nature, the Son of God, vs. 3, 4. From this divine person he had received his office as an apostle. The object of this office was to bring men to believe the gospel; and it contemplated all nations as the field of its labour, v. 5. Of course the Romans were included, v. 6. To the Romar Christians, therefore, he wishes grace and peace, v. 7. Thus far the salutation.

Having shown in what character, and by what right he addressed them, the apostle introduces the subject of his letter by expressing to them his respect and affection. He thanks God not only that they believed, but that their faith was universally known and talked of, v. 9 As an evidence of his concern for them, he mentions, 1. That he prayed for them constantly, v. 9. 2. That he longed to see them, vs. 10, 11. 3. That this wish to see them arose from a desire to do them good, and to reap some fruit of his ministry among them, as well as among other Gentiles, vs. 12, 13. Because he was under obligation to preach to all men, wise and unwise, he was therefore ready to preach even at Rome, vs. 14, 15. This readiness to preach arose from the high estimate he entertained of the gospel. And his reverence for the gospel was founded not on its excellent system of morals merely, but on its efficacy in saving all who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles. v. 16. This efficacy of the gospel arises from its teaching the true method of justification, that is, the method of justification by faith, v. 17. It will be perceived how naturally and skilfully the apostle introduces the two great subjects of the epistle—the method of salvation, and the persons to whom it may properly be offered.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called* to be *an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.* The apostle's original name was Saul, *the demanded*, or *asked for*. It was common among the Jews and other oriental nations to change the names of individuals on the occurrence of any remarkable event in their lives, as in the case of Abraham and Jacob, Gen. 17: 5,

32 : 28. This was especially the case when the individual was advanced to some new office or dignity, Gen. 41 : 45. Dan. 1 : 6, 7. Hence a new name is sometimes equivalent to a new dignity, Apoc. 2 : 17. As Paul seems to have received this name shortly after he entered on his duties as an apostle, it is often supposed, and not improbably, that it was on account of this call that his name was changed. Thus Simon, when chosen to be an apostle, was called Cephas or Peter, John 1 : 42. Matt. 10 : 2. Since, however, it was very common for those Jews who associated much with foreigners to have two names, one Jewish and the other Greek or Roman; sometimes entirely distinct, as Hillel and Pollio; sometimes nearly related, as Silas and Silvanus, it is perhaps more probable that the apostle was called Saul among the Jews, and Paul among the heathen. As he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and all his epistles, except that to the Hebrews, were addressed to churches founded among the heathen, it is not wonderful that he constantly called himself Paul instead of Saul. He styles himself *a servant of Jesus Christ*. This term is often used to express the relation in which, under the New Testament, the apostles stood to Christ, as in Gal. 1 : 10. Phil. 1 : 1, &c., as in the Old Testament the phrase *servant of God* expresses the relation in which any one employed in his special service stood to God, Josh. 24 : 29. Num. 12 : 7. Judges 2 : 8, &c. &c. It is therefore a general official designation.

Called an apostle. The word rendered *called*, means also *chosen*, *appointed*, see vs. 6 and 7 of this chapter. 1 Cor. 1 : 1. and 24. Rom. 8 : 28. compare Isaiah 48 : 12. "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel my called," i. e. *my chosen*. 51: 2. 42 : 6. In the epistles of the New Testament this word is rarely if ever used in reference to one externally called or invited to any office or blessing, but uniformly expresses the idea of an effectual calling, or of a selection and appointment. Paul begins several of his epistles by claiming to be thus divinely commissioned as an apostle, because his appointment was different from that of the other apostles, and its validity had frequently been called in question.

The term *apostle* or *messenger*, with few exceptions, is applied exclusively to those thirteen individuals appointed by Jesus Christ to deliver to men the message of salvation; to authenticate that message by signs and wonders, Heb. 2 : 4, and especially by their testimony as eye-witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, Acts 1 : 22. 2 : 32. 3 : 15. 1 Cor 15 : 15; and to organize the Christian church by the appointment of officers and the general ordering of its affairs. It was therefore necessary that an apostle should have seen Christ after he rose from the dead, 1 Cor. 9 : 1.

Separated unto the gospel of God. The word rendered *separated* expresses the idea both of selection and appointment, Lev. 20 : 24, 26. Acts 13 : 2. Gal. 1 : 15. Paul was chosen and set apart to preach the gospel of God; that is, the gospel of which God is the author.

(2) *Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures*

It was peculiarly pertinent to the apostle's object to state, that the gospel which he taught was not a new doctrine, much less in consistent with writings which his readers knew to be of divine authority. This idea he therefore frequently repeats in reference to the method of salvation, ch. 3 : 21. 10 : 11, &c.; the rejection of the Jews, ch. 9 : 27, 33. 10 : 20. 21; and the calling of the Gentiles, ch. 9 : 25. 10 : 19, &c. See Luke 24. 44. John 12 : 16. Acts 10 : 43.

(3, 4) *Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*, &c. This verse is to be connected with the last clause of the first, and states the grand subject of that gospel which Paul was appointed to preach. That subject which includes all others, is the Son of God. Having mentioned the name, Paul immediately declares the nature of this exalted personage. The passage which follows is therefore peculiarly interesting, as giving a clear exhibition of the apostle's view of the character of Christ, and the import of the phrase *Son of God.*

There are three leading interpretations of this passage. According to the first, the meaning is, 'Jesus Christ was, as to his human nature, the Son of David; but he was clearly demonstrated to be, as to his divine nature, the Son of God, by the resurrection from the dead.' According to the second, the passage means, 'Christ was, in his state of humiliation, the Son of David, but was constituted the Son of God in his state of exaltation, by the resurrection from the dead; or, after his resurrection.' According to the third, 'Christ was the Son of David, as to his human nature, but was declared to be the Son of God, *agreeably to the scriptures*, by the resurrection from the dead.'

The first of these interpretations is recommended by the following considerations. 1. The sense which it assigns to the several clauses may be justified by usage, and is required by the context. This will appear from the examination of each, as they occur. *Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. Was made*, i. e. was born, see the same sense of the word here used, Gal. 4 : 4. John 8 : 41. 1 Pet. 3 : 6. The phrase *according to the flesh* means as to his human nature, as far as he was a man. The word *flesh* is often used for *men* as in the expression "all flesh," and very frequently for human nature considered as corrupt, as in the expressions "to be in the flesh,"—"to live after the flesh," &c. But when used in reference to Christ the accessory ideas of weakness and corruption are of course excluded, as in the phrases "became flesh," John 1 : 14; "was manifested in the flesh," 1 Tim. 3 : 16; "has come in the flesh," 1 John 4 : 2. In all these cases it stands for human nature, as such, not merely for the body or visible part of man, nor for his external circumstances and condition, but for all that Christ had in common with other men. That such is its meaning in this passage is also obvious from the connexion. In what sense is Christ of the family of David but as he was a man? Compare the analogous passage, Rom. 9 : 5.

And declared to be *the Son of God with power.* That the word rendered

declared has, in this case, that meaning, may be argued, 1. From its etymology. It comes from a word signifying a *limit* or *boundary*, and literally means *to set limits to, to define*, and such, in usage, is its frequent signification. *To define* is nearly related both to *appointing*, and to *naming, declaring, exhibiting a person or thing in its true nature.* In the New Testament, indeed the word, as in common Greek, is used generally to express the former idea, viz. that of constituting, or appointing; but the sense which our version gives it is in many cases involved in the other, Acts 10: 42. 17: 31. 2. The Greek commentators, Chrysostom and Theodoret, both so explain the word. So does the Syriac version. 3. This explanation supposes the word to be used in a popular and general sense, but does not assign to it a new meaning. 3. Reference may be made to that familiar biblical usage, according to which words are used declaratively. Thus, to make guilty, is to pronounce to be guilty; to make just, is to pronounce to be just; to make unclean, is to declare to be unclean. Hence, admitting that the words literally mean, '*made* the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead,' they may, with the strictest regard to usage, be interpreted, *exhibited as made, declared to be.* 4. The *necessity of the place* requires this interpretation; because it is not true that Christ was made the Son of God by his resurrection, since he was such before that event. 5. The passage, unless thus explained, is inconsistent with other declarations of the sacred writers, Acts 1: 22, &c., which speak of Christ's resurrection as the evidence of what he was, but not as making him either Son or King.

The words *with power* may either be connected adjectively with the preceding phrase, and the meaning be 'the powerful Son of God;' or, which is preferable, adverbially with the word *declared*, 'he was powerfully, i. e. clearly declared to be the Son of God.' As when the sun shines out in his power, he is seen and felt in all his glory, so Christ, when he arose from the dead, was recognised at once as the Son of God.

According to the spirit of holiness; that is, as to his divine nature. That this is the correct interpretation of this phrase appears, 1. Because the term *spirit* is obviously applicable to the nature of God, and the word *holiness*, which here qualifies it adjectively, expresses every thing in God which is the foundation of reverence. It therefore exalts the idea expressed by *spirit.* 'According to that spiritual essence in Christ, which is worthy of the highest reverence.' 2. The divine nature in Christ is elsewhere called Spirit, Heb. 9: 14, "If the blood of bulls and of goats sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, with an eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God." That is, 'if the blood of animals was of any avail, how much more efficacious must be the sacrifice of Christ, who was possessed of a divine nature.' In our version this passage is rendered *through*, instead of *with* an eternal Spirit; but this does not so well suit the context, nor give so good a sense. In 1 Tim. 3: 16, "God was manifest in the flesh; justified in the Spirit," the meaning probably is, the

fact that God was incarnate was proved, and his claims vindicated by the divine nature, which exhibited its power and glory in so many ways, in the words and works of Christ. In 1 Pet. 3: 18, Christ is said to have been put to death *as to the flesh*, but to have remained alive *as to the Spirit*, by which Spirit he preached to the spirits in prison. If this preaching refers to the times before the flood, then does *Spirit* here also mean the divine nature of Christ. 3. The antithesis obviously demands this interpretation—*as to the flesh*, Christ was the Son of David, *as to the Spirit*, the Son of God: if the flesh means his human, the Spirit must mean his divine nature. 4. It is confirmed by a comparison with ch. 9: 5; there the two natures of Christ are also brought into view and contrasted; as to the flesh he was an Israelite, but as to his higher nature he is God over all and blessed for ever. So the latter clause of that passage answers to the latter clause of this; to be the Son of God, is equivalent to being God over all.

By the resurrection from the dead. That is, the resurrection of Christ was the great decisive evidence that he was the Son of God; it was the public acknowledgment by God of the validity of all the claims which Christ had made. Hence the apostles were appointed as witnesses of that fact, Acts 1: 22. see on v. 1. This, of course, does not at all imply that the resurrection of Christ in itself was any proof that he was the Son of God, any further than it was a proof that he was all that he had claimed to be, and as, in its attending circumstances, it was a display of his divine power. He had power to lay down his life, and he had power to take it again. This clause is sometimes rendered "*after* the resurrection from the dead." The preposition used in the Greek admits of either rendering; but the former is better suited to the context, and more in accordance with the manner in which Paul speaks elsewhere of the resurrection. See the passages cited above.

The expression 'Son of God' is used in scripture almost exclusively in reference to Jesus Christ. Adam, indeed, is so called in the genealogical table given in Luke ch. 3. to express the idea of his immediate creation by God. But the expression is applied to Christ in a sense in which it is applicable to no other being. It appears from this and other passages that it implies that Christ is of the same nature with God, partaker of the same essence and attributes. Thus in John 5: 17, Christ calls God his father in such a sense as thereby to claim equality with God. Compare John 1: 14. 10: 30—39. Heb. 1: 4—7.

(5) *By whom we have received grace and apostleship*, &c. Having in the preceding verses set forth the character of Jesus Christ, as at once the Son of David and the Son of God, Paul says it was from him, and not from any inferior source, that he received his authority. This point he often insists upon, Gal. 1: 1. 1 Cor. 1: 1, &c. The word *grace* means favour, kindness, and is often metonymically used for any gift proceeding from kindness, especially unmerited kindness. Hence all the gifts of the Spirit are *graces*, unmerited favours. The greatest of God's

gifts, after that of his Son, is the influence of the Holy Ghost; this, therefore, in the Bible, and in common life, is called, by way of eminence, *grace*. The word may be so understood here, and include all those influences of the Holy Spirit by which Paul was furnished for his work. The two words *grace* and *apostleship* may however be taken together, and mean 'the grace or favour of being an apostle;' but the former explanation is to be preferred.

For obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name. Literally *unto obedience of the faith.* This expresses the design or object for which the office of apostle was conferred upon Paul. It was that all nations might be made obedient. Similar modes of expression are frequent; "Baptism unto repentance," i. e. that men might repent; "unto salvation," that they might be saved, &c. It is doubtful whether the word *faith* is to be understood here as in Gal. 1: 23, "He preacheth the faith which he once destroyed;" and frequently elsewhere, for the object of faith; or whether it is to be taken in its ordinary sense for the exercise of belief. Either interpretation gives a good sense; according to the former, the meaning is, 'that all nations should be obedient to the gospel;' according to the latter, 'that they should yield that obedience which consists in faith.' The former is the most common explanation, see Acts 6: 7. *Among all nations* is most naturally connected with the immediately preceding clause, 'that obedience might be promoted among all nations.' They may, however, be referred to the former clause, 'we have received the apostleship among all nations.' The words *for his name* are still more doubtful as to their connexion. Some join them with the middle clause, 'for obedience of faith in his name,' see Acts 26: 18. But this the words will hardly bear. Others connect them with the first clause, 'apostleship in his name,' 2 Cor. 5: 20. Others again, and more naturally, to the whole preceding clause. 'Paul was an apostle that all nations might be obedient to the honour of Jesus Christ;' that is, so that his name may be known.

(6) *Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.* If the gospel contemplated all nations as the field of its operation, the Romans of course were not to be excluded. They, i. e. the persons addressed, were of the number of those who had become obedient to the faith. *The called of Jesus Christ* means those who are effectually called, not invited merely, but made actually partakers of the blessings to which they are called. The word *called* is often, therefore, as in the first verse, equivalent with *chosen*, see the passages cited on that verse. In 1 Cor. 1: 24, Christ is said to be a stumbling-block to one class of men, and foolishness to another; "but to those that are called, the power of God," &c. Rev. 17: 14, "those who are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful," see, too, the frequent use of different forms of the verb signifying *to call*, Rom. 8: 30; "them he also called," Jude 1; "to the called," 1 Pet. 5: 10. 2: 9. Such a call is in fact a choice; it is a taking one from among many. Hence, to be called, is to be chosen, as just remarked. *Called*

of Jesus Christ does not mean *called by Jesus Christ;* but the genitive expresses the idea of possession, 'the called ones who belong to Christ,' 'Christ's called, or chosen ones.'

(7) *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called* to be *saints.* As this verse contains the salutation, it is, in sense, immediately connected with the first. 'Paul an apostle to all that be at Rome.' All that intervenes is not properly a parenthesis, but an accumulation of clauses, one growing out of the other, and preventing the apostle finishing the sentence with which he commenced. This is very characteristic of Paul's manner, and is peculiarly obvious in his two epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. His teeming mind protruded its rich thoughts and glowing sentiments so rapidly, that his course was often impeded, and the original object for a time entirely lost sight of. See Ephesians 3 : 1, where the sentence, with which the first verse begins, is interrupted, and is not resumed until v. 14, or perhaps, the beginning of the next chapter.

The salutation of Paul is addressed to all the Christians who were at Rome, whom he calls *beloved of God*, and *called* to be *saints.* The people of God are often, both in the Old and New Testament, distinguished by the honourable appellation, *beloved of God*, Deut. 33 : 12. Col. 3 : 12. *Called* to be *saints*, means *chosen* or *made saints;* as in v. 1, *called* to be *an apostle*, means *chosen* or *appointed an apostle*, see 1 Cor. 1 : 2. The fact that they were saints, was to be attributed to the gracious choice or call of God. The word translated *saints* properly means *separated*, and is applied in a multitude of cases in the Old Testament, both to persons and things consecrated to God. In this sense all the Hebrews were a holy people. But in the New Testament when used in reference to persons, it expresses their moral relation to God, in the great majority of cases. This is its meaning here. The Roman Christians were called to be not merely a people consecrated externally to God, as were the Jews, but to be morally holy, see the remarks on ch. 11 : 16. *Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.* This is the common form of salutation. *Grace* is the divine favour; and *peace* is the consequence of it, and includes, as does the corresponding Hebrew word, all blessings. Compare the phrases "way of peace," "God of peace," "gospel of peace," and the like. Hence it is used constantly in salutations, "Peace be with you," i. e. may all good rest upon you. The Greek term has this extent of meaning from being used with the same latitude as the Hebrew word, which signifies, as an adjective, *complete* (*integer*), and as a substantive, *completeness* (*integritas*), *well-being;* and, therefore, includes all that is necessary to make one what he would wish to be. When the favour of God is secured, all other blessings follow in its train.

These blessings are sought from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is equally with the Father the source of these blessings, and therefore the object of prayer; which, under such circumstances. and for such blessings, is one of the highest acts of worship. God is

called our Father, as he from whom all good ultimately comes; and Jesus Christ is called Lord, as our Ruler, under whose care and protection we are placed, and through whose ministration all good is actually bestowed.

(8) *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all*, &c. From this verse to the end of the 17th we have the general introduction to the epistle. It is distinguished by the usual characteristics of the introductory portions of the apostle's letters; as it is commendatory, conciliatory, and appropriate. Before introducing any other topic, the apostle expresses his gratitude to God on their account. *My God* is the endearing form of expression which he uses, in the consciousness of his reconciliation. "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people," Jer. 30: 22, contains all the blessings of the covenant of grace. *My God through Jesus Christ*, as these words are often explained, thus expressing the idea that God is our God, or is reconciled to us through Jesus Christ. The latter clause may, however, be connected with the words *I give thanks*. This is the more natural construction, and is recommended by a comparison with such passages as Eph. 5: 20, "Giving thanks in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," Heb. 13: 15. John 14: 13. These passages show that we must recognise the mediation of Christ in our offerings to God.

That your faith is spoken of throughout the world. This is the ground of the apostle's thanksgiving; and of course assumes that faith is the gift of God, something for which we ought to be thankful. The cause of the faith of the Romans being so generally spoken of, may have been either that it was remarkably strong and decided, or that it was considered of special importance that at Rome, the capital of the world, the gospel had been embraced.

(9) *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit, in the gospel of his Son*, &c. That Paul was really thankful for the conversion of the Romans, he confirms by the fact that he was constantly mindful of them in his prayers; and that he did thus remember them, he calls God to witness. This appeal to God as a witness of the truth of our declarations approaches very nearly to the nature of an oath, wanting only the imprecation of divine displeasure in the case of falsehood. It is, with Paul, not unfrequent, 2 Cor. 1: 23. Gal. 1: 20. Phil. 1: 8, &c. &c. The word rendered *I serve*, means, properly, *I worship*, or *perform religious service*, and is always elsewhere used in this sense in the New Testament. This meaning may be here retained, "whom I worship in my spirit," i. e. not merely externally, but cordially; and the clause *in the gospel of his Son* may mean either agreeably to the gospel, or in preaching the gospel. If the latter, the idea may be that preaching the gospel is itself a religious service; or that his devotion to this duty was evidence that he was a sincere worshipper. The former interpretation is the simpler of the two—*according to the gospel.*

(10) *Making request if by any means now at length I might have a*

prosperous journey, by the will of God, to come unto you. Not merely the fact that he prayed, but the subject of his prayers, evinced his interest in the Roman Christians. *If by any means now at length* expresses the strength of the apostle's desire to see them, and implies that it had been, as he afterwards assures them was the case, long cherished. *I may have a prosperous journey;* this is all expressed by one word in the Greek, which means *I may be prospered,* see 1 Cor. 16 : 2. 3 John v. 2. The idea therefore is, "that God would order things favourably to his visiting them." *By the will of God,* not merely by the divine favour, but under the divine guidance.

(11) *For I long to see you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift,* &c. The desire of the apostle to visit Rome arose from no idle curiosity, nor from a mere desire of intercourse with his fellow Christians, but from a wish to be useful. *Spiritual gifts* are gifts of which the Holy Spirit is the author, and include not only those miraculous endowments, of which such frequent mention is made in the epistle to the Corinthians and elsewhere, but also the ordinary gifts of teaching, exhortation, and prophecying, enumerated in 1 Cor. 12. Gifts of the former class were communicated by laying on of the hands of the apostles, Acts 8 : 17. 19 : 6, and therefore abounded in churches founded by the apostles, 1 Cor. 1 : 7. Gal. 3 : 5. In this case the expression includes any and every benefit, of a religious kind, which the apostle might be the means of bestowing. comp. vs. 12, 13.

(12) *That is, that I may be comforted together with you,* &c. This verse is connected with the last clause of the preceding; it does not imply that the apostle was to receive from them the same gifts that he wished to impart to them, but that he expected to be benefited by their improvement. It is designed, therefore, with singular modesty, to insinuate that he did not imagine himself above being improved by the Roman Christians, or that the benefit would be all on one side. He hoped to derive good from those to whom he imparted good. The word rendered *to comfort,* means *to invite, to exhort, to instruct, to console,* &c. Which of these senses is to be preferred here it is not easy to decide. Most probably the apostle intended to use the word in a wide sense, as expressing the idea that he might be excited, encouraged, and comforted by his intercourse with his Christian brethren.

(13) *Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you,* &c. In ch. 15 : 22, 23, he mentions the same fact, and says this purpose had been long entertained; its execution was prevented by providential circumstances, or direct intimations of the divine will. In 1 Thess. 2 : 18, he tells the Thessalonians that Satan had hindered his coming to them. In Acts 16 : 6, 7, it is said that he "was forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia." And in Rom. 15 : 21, 22, he says his pressing calls to preach the gospel where it had not before been heard, had much hindered his going to Rome. His object in desiring to visit them was *that he might have some*

fruit among them, as among other Gentiles. To have fruit, commonly means to derive advantage from; ch. 6 : 21, 22, "what fruit had ye," i. e. what advantage had ye. Many give the words this sense here, and understand the apostle as referring to personal benefits of some kind, which he wished to derive from preaching to them. But it is much more natural to understand him as referring to that fruit which, as Calvin remarks, the apostles were sent to gather. John 15 : 16, "I have chosen you that ye might go and bring forth fruit (i. e. produce great results), and that your fruit should remain."

(14) *I am debtor both to the Greeks and the Barbarians, both the wise and the unwise.* That is, "I am officially bound to preach to all classes of men." Those whom he calls in the first clause Greeks and Barbarians, he calls in the second wise and unwise. As the Greeks called all foreigners Barbarians, and as most other nations were uncivilized, the term barbarian was often used as equivalent to *rude, uncultivated*. Properly, however, it means a *foreigner, one of another language*, especially in reference to the Greeks : for the Romans were called and called themselves barbarians, until the Greek language and literature prevailed among them. Paul uses it in its original sense in 1 Cor. 14 : 11, "I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me," i. e. we shall be as foreigners to each other, if one uses a tongue unknown to the other. It is used, as here, for those destitute of Roman or Jewish culture, Acts 28 : 2, 4, and Col. 3 : 11. It is said to have been first employed as a term of reproach by the Greeks in reference to the Persians after their wars with that people.

(15) *So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.* As the apostle's obligation extended to all classes, he was prepared to preach even at Rome, where he might expect the greatest opposition and contempt. Our translation of the first clause of this verse is the same as that given by Grotius. It may, however, be rendered *so, my desire is*, or *so, I am ready*.

(16) *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* We have here the theme of the whole epistle. The gospel proposes salvation on the condition of faith; and it is universally applicable to the Greek as well as the Jew. These ideas are presented more fully in the two following verses. Thus naturally does the apostle introduce the great topics of discussion, the method of salvation, and the persons to whom it may be proposed. The connexion between this and the preceding verse is obvious. The reason why he was ready to preach the gospel, even in the proud capital of the world, was that it is divinely efficacious in securing the salvation of men. It does what no other system ever did or can accomplish. The words rendered *the power of God* may be taken for *divinely efficacious ;* better, however, as expressing the idea of *that through which the power of God is manifested*, Acts 8 : 10. 1 Cor. 1 : 18, 24. 'The gospel is an instrument, in the hands of God,

truly powerful in saving men.' *To every one that believeth.* Emphasis must be laid upon both members of this clause. The gospel is thus efficacious *to every one*, without distinction between Jew and Gentile; and to every one *that believeth*, not who is circumcised, or who obeys the law, or who does this or that, but who believes, i. e. who receives and confides in Jesus Christ in all the characters, and for all the purposes, in which he is presented in the gospel. It will be very clearly seen in the progress of the epistle that Paul attributes no special efficacy to faith itself, considered as an exercise of the mind. As such, it is no more worthy of being the condition of salvation than love, or repentance, or resignation, or any other act of obedience to the law of God. It is as the organ of reception; as the acquiescence of the soul in the method of salvation proposed in the gospel, that it is the turning point in the destiny of every human being. The grand idea of this epistle, and of the whole Bible (as far as this subject is concerned), is that the ground of our justification, and the source of our sanctification, are not in ourselves; that neither human merit nor human power can have any of the glory of our salvation. To the merit of Christ we owe our acceptance with God, and to the power of the Holy Ghost our preparation for his presence. *To the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* It would be in direct contradiction to one of the prominent objects of the apostle in writing this epistle, as well as to his explicit declarations, to make this clause teach that the gospel was specially designed or adapted for the Jews, see ch. 3: 9, 22, 29. 10: 12, &c. The meaning obviously is, 'for the Jew in the first instance, and then for the Greek.' The gospel was to be preached to all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem*, compare Acts 3: 26 and 13: 26. Paul often says 'Jews and *Greeks*' for 'Jews and Gentiles,' ch. 2: 9. 3: 9, &c., because, after the conquests of Alexander, the Greeks were the Gentiles with whom the Jews were most familiar.

(17) *For therein the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith*, &c. The reason why the gospel is so efficacious in the salvation of men, i. e. in securing the pardon of their sins, and the moral renovation of their hearts and lives, is not that it reveals a perfect moral system, or that it teaches the doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment, or that it discloses new views of the divine character. All this is true and efficacious; but the power of the gospel lies in the fact that it teaches the doctrine of justification by faith, or, in other words, it reveals *the righteousness of God by faith.* This expression is one of the most important in the epistle, and is variously explained.

The word rendered *righteousness* has, in the Scriptures, a very great extent and variety of meaning. It signifies not merely *justice* in its strict sense, but general rectitude, including all moral excellence. It is used, therefore, especially in the Old Testament, for almost every specific virtue, as truth, benevolence, mercy, &c. Its common and proper meaning is, *that which makes a man just*, i. e. which fulfils and satisfies all the claims of justice or law. Hence, *a just man* is one who can stand in judgment.

See the constant opposition between the *just* and the *unjust;* between those who can, and those who cannot answer the demands of law. The word, therefore, expresses together with the idea of excellence that of a claim or title to its consequent rewards; in other words, it expresses the whole state or condition of those who have done all that the law requires in order to the enjoyment of the divine favour. Sometimes one, and sometimes the other of these two leading ideas is the more prominent. The word *righteousness*, therefore, is sometimes equivalent to moral rectitude or excellence, and sometimes to salvation. See such passages as Isa. 45: 8. 51: 5. 56: 1, where the words *righteousness* and *salvation* are used as nearly synonymous. Compare also Ps. 24: 5, "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation;" here righteousness is equivalent to justification. This passage (Ps. 24: 5), therefore, may be rendered, "He shall be justified by the God of his salvation." In a multitude of cases the word is used in this complex sense in the New Testament, Gal. 2: 21, "If righteousness (justification, i. e. excellence and its consequences) *come* by the law, Christ is dead in vain." Gal. 3: 21, "If there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness (justification in the same sense as before) would have been by the law." Thus, too, in the phrases "ministration of righteousness," 2 Cor. 3: 9; "the law of righteousness," Rom. 9: 31, &c. the word is used in the same sense. It is the prominent doctrine of the apostle Paul, that this righteousness, this meritorious excellence and its consequent blessings, cannot be obtained by the law, that it is secured by faith, and is the gift of God; it is the righteousness of God, i. e. that which he bestows.

In this and other passages in this epistle where the expression "righteousness of God" occurs, it is subjected to various interpretations. The three most important are the following. According to the first it means, the justice, rectitude, or mercy of God. According to the second it means, God's method of justification; and according to the third and most common, that righteousness which God bestows, and which is acceptable in his sight. In favour of this last interpretation it may be argued,—1. That it assigns to the word *righteousness* its most common and appropriate meaning. 2. It suits almost all the passages in which the phrase "righteousness of God" occurs; see ch. 3: 21. 10: 3. Phil. 3: 9, &c. 3. It is suitable to the opposition between the expressions "righteousness of faith" and "righteousness of the law." The former means that excellence (together with its consequences) which is obtained by faith, the latter that which is obtained by obedience to the law. 4. It is especially recommended by a comparison with Phil. 3: 9. "Not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Here, it is evident, that "the righteousness which is of God" means that justifying righteousness which God gives, as distinguished from that which is obtained by our own works; and is the apostle's own explana

tion of the more concise phrase "righteousness of God." 5. This interpretation is entirely suitable to the context. The efficacy of the gospel is attributed to the fact that a meritorious and saving excellence is therein revealed, and which God offers as the ground of the sinner's dependence in preference to any righteousness or merit of his own.

The words *from faith to faith* are not to be connected with the word revealed, as though the meaning were, 'revealed from faith to faith,' but with the word righteousness. It is "the righteousness of God, *which is by faith to faith*," that is disclosed by the gospel. The most natural interpretation of these words is that which makes the repetition merely intensive—'from faith to faith,' entirely of faith, in which works have no part. See 2 Cor. 2: 16, "death to death," means very deadly, "life unto life," eminently salutary. That righteousness, then, which is acceptable before God is that of which he is the author, and which is received by faith alone.

As it is written, The just shall live by faith. The words, *as it is written*, are the usual formula of reference to the Old Testament. In what relation the passage cited may stand to the topic in hand, whether as a prediction, or an inculcation of the same or some analogous truth, or of something which may serve as an illustration, depends entirely on the context. In the present case, Paul wishes to show the importance of faith, by a reference to a passage in Habakkuk 2: 4, in which the prophet declares that the safety of the people depended upon their believing. Those who turned a deaf ear to the threatenings and promises of God should perish, but those who believed should live. The passage, therefore, is directly in point, and shows that, as well in reference to the external theocracy of the Old Testament, as to the spiritual theocracy or kingdom of Christ, under the New Testament, the favour of God was to be secured by faith.

Agreeably to the position of the words in the original, these words may be pointed either thus, 'the just by faith, shall live,' or thus, 'the just, by faith shall live.' The former is more consistent with the immediate object of the apostle, who is speaking of a *justness by faith*. It is also the connexion and sense of the words in the Old Testament. *Shall live*, shall enjoy the favour of God, whose favour is life, and whose loving-kindness is better than life, see Rom. 5: 17. 8: 13. 10: 5, and the numerous passages in which the word *life* expresses all the benefits of the redemption of Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. The apostolic office, except as to what was peculiar and extraordinary, being essentially the same with the ministerial office in general, Paul teaches, 1. That ministers are the servants of Christ, deriving their authority from him, and not from the people; 2. That their calling is to preach the gospel, to which all other avocations must be made subordinate; 3. That the object of their appointment is to bring men to the obe-

dience of faith; 4. That their field is all nations; 5. That the design of all is to honour Christ; it is for his name, vs. 1—5.

2. The gospel is contained, in its rudiments, in the Old Testament. It is the soul of the old dispensation, v. 2.

3. Christ is the Alpha and Omega of the gospel. In stating the substance of the gospel, Paul says, 'It concerns Jesus Christ,' v. 3.

4. Christ is at once God and man; the son of David and the Son of God, vs. 3, 4.

5. Christ is called the Son of God in reference to his divine nature, and on account of the relation in which, as God, he stands to the Father. The name, therefore, is expressive of his divine character, vs. 3, 4.

6. He is the proper object of prayer, and the source of spiritual blessings, v. 7.

7. He is the mediator, through whom our prayers and thanksgiving must be presented unto God, v. 8.

8. God is the source of all spiritual good; is to be worshipped in spirit, and agreeably to the gospel; and his providence is to be recognised in reference to the most ordinary affairs of life, vs. 8—10.

9. Ministers are not a class of men exalted above the people, and independent of them for spiritual benefits, but are bound to seek, as well as to impart good, in all their intercourse with those to whom they are sent, vs. 11, 12.

10. Ministers are bound to preach the gospel to all men, rich as well as poor, wise as well as unwise; for it is equally adapted to the wants of all, vs. 14, 15.

11. The salvation of men, including the pardon of their sins, and the moral renovation of their hearts, can be effected by the gospel alone. The wisdom of men, during four thousand years previous to the advent of Christ, failed to discover any adequate means for the attainment of either of these objects; and those who, since the advent, have neglected the gospel, have been equally unsuccessful, v. 16, &c.

12. The power of the gospel lies not in its pure theism, or perfect moral code, but in the CROSS, in the doctrine of justification by faith in a crucified Redeemer, v. 17, &c.

REMARKS.

1. Ministers should remember that they are "separated unto the gospel," and that any occupation which, by its demands upon their attention, or from its influence on their character or feelings, interferes with their devotion to this object, is for them wrong, v. 1.

2. If Jesus Christ is the great subject of the gospel, it is evident that we cannot have right views of the one, without having correct opinions respecting the other. What think ye of Christ? cannot be a minor question. To be Christians we must recognise him as the Messiah, or Son of David; and as divine, or the Son of God; we must be able to

pray to him, to look for blessings from him, and recognise him as the mediator between God and man, vs. 1—8.

3. Christians should remember that they are *saints*; that is, persons separated from the world and consecrated to God. They therefore cannot serve themselves or the world, without a dereliction of their character. They are saints, because called and made such of God. To all such, grace and peace are secured by the mediation of Christ, and the promise of God, v. 7.

4. In presenting truth, every thing consistent with fidelity should be done to conciliate the confidence and kind feelings of those to whom it is addressed; and every thing avoided, which tends to excite prejudice against the speaker or his message. Who more faithful than Paul? Yet who more anxious to avoid offence? Who more solicitous to present the truth, not in its most irritating form, but in the manner best adapted to gain for it access to the unruffled minds of his readers? vs. 8—14.

5. As all virtues, according to the Christian system, are graces (gifts), they afford matter for thanksgiving, but never for self-commendation, v. 8.

6. The intercourse of Christians should be desired, and made to result in edification, by their mutual faith, v. 12.

7. He who rejects the doctrine of justification by faith, rejects the gospel. His whole method of salvation, and system of religion, must be different from those of the apostles, v. 17.

8. Whether we be wise or unwise, moral or immoral, in the sight of men, orthodox or heterodox in our opinions; unless we are believers, unless we cordially receive 'the righteousness which is of God,' as the ground of acceptance, we have not part or lot in the salvation of the gospel, v. 17.

CHAP. 1: 18—32.

18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. 20For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. 24Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25who

changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. [26]For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: [27]and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one towards another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. [28]And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; [29]being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, [30]backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, [31]without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: [32]who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

ANALYSIS.

The apostle, having stated that the only righteousness available in the sight of God is that which is obtained by faith, proceeds to prove that such is the case. This proof required that he should, in the first instance, demonstrate that the righteousness which is of the law, or of works, was insufficient for the justification of a sinner. This he does, first in reference to the Gentiles, ch. 1: 18—32; and then in relation to the Jews, ch. 2:—3: 1—20. The residue of this chapter then is designed to prove that the Gentiles are justly exposed to condemnation. The apostle thus argues: God is just; his displeasure against sin (which is its punishment) is clearly revealed, v. 18. This principle is assumed by the apostle as the foundation of his whole argument. If this be granted, it follows that all, who are chargeable with either impiety or immorality, are exposed to the wrath of God, and cannot claim his favour on the ground of their own character or conduct. That the Gentiles are justly chargeable with both impiety and immorality, he thus proves. They have ever enjoyed such a revelation of the divine character as to render them inexcusable, vs. 19, 20. Notwithstanding this opportunity of knowing God, they neither worshipped nor served him, but gave themselves up to all forms of idolatry. This is the height of all impiety, vs. 21, 23. In consequence of this desertion of God, he gave them up to the evil of their own hearts, so that they sank into all manner of debasing crimes. The evidences of this corruption of morals were so painfully obvious, that Paul merely appeals to the knowledge which his readers all possessed of the fact, vs. 24—31. These various crimes they do not commit ignorantly; they are aware of their ill-desert; and yet they not only commit them themselves, but encourage others in the same course, v. 32.

The inference from the established sinfulness of the Gentile world, Paul does not draw, until he has substantiated the same charge against the Jews. He then says, since all are sinners before God, no flesh can be justified by the works of the law, ch. 3: 20.

COMMENTARY.

(18) *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men*, &c. The connexion of this verse with the preceding, and consequently the force of the particle *for*, will be perceived, if it is remembered that Paul had just asserted, that those only who were just by faith, could live; in other words, that no righteousness but that which is of God by faith, can avail to the justification of men. The reason is assigned in this verse; God is just. Men must be justified by faith, *for* the wrath of God is revealed, &c. *The wrath of God* means his disapprobation of sin and his determination to punish it. The passion which is called anger or wrath, and which is always mixed more or less with malignity in the human breast, is, of course, infinitely removed from what the word imports when used in reference to God. Yet as anger in men leads to the infliction of evil on its object, the word is, agreeable to a principle which pervades the Scriptures, applied to the calm and undeviating purpose of the divine Mind, which secures the connexion between sin and misery, with the same general uniformity that any other law in the physical or moral government of God operates. This wrath *is revealed from heaven*, that is, it is clearly revealed; made known *from heaven*, where God dwells, and whence all manifestations of his character are said to proceed. This revelation is *from heaven*, as the lightning is, which forces itself on the most reluctant vision. Paul assumes that God's punitive justice forces itself on the knowledge and conviction of every sinner. He, therefore, neither tells us how it is manifested, nor does he attempt to prove that such is the fact. It is one of those obvious and ultimate truths which, existing in every man's consciousness, may safely be assumed as both known and admitted.

Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Although the words *ungodliness* and *unrighteousness* are often used indiscriminately, they are not to be considered in this case as synonymous, because Paul distinctly proves that the Gentiles are chargeable both with impiety and immorality, in the ordinary acceptation of these terms. These two all-comprehensive classes of sins are declared to be the objects of the divine displeasure.

Who hold the truth in unrighteousness. The word *truth* is here variously explained. It is obviously inconsistent with the context to understand it of the gospel, as though the apostle meant to denounce judgment on those who opposed the gospel. The word is used with considerable latitude in the Scriptures. It is often used for *true religion*, including both its doctrines, John 8: 32. Rom. 2: 20. 2 Cor. 4: 2, &c.

&c., and its duties, John 3 : 21. 1 John 1 : 6, "who do not the truth," &c. Such is probably its meaning here. The word rendered *to hold*, in the sense of *having in possession*, is so used in 1 Cor. 7 : 30. 15 : 2. Luke 8 : 15, &c. If this sense be adopted here, the word *truth* must be understood *objectively*, for the true doctrine ; and *in unrighteousness* should be rendered *with unrighteousness*. The meaning of the clause would then be, 'who have the truth with unrighteousness,' i. e. although possessed of the truth are still unrighteous. See James 2 : 1, for a precisely similar expression, "my brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, with respect of persons," i. e. do not, if believers, cherish a respect of persons. As, however, the word also means *to hold back*, *to hinder*, and then *to impede ;* it may be so understood here, and the clause be rendered 'who oppose the truth by unrighteousness ;' or better, 'who wickedly oppose the truth,' i. e. religion. The latter interpretation is the simpler of the two, but the former is sustained, in some measure, by a comparison with v. 21, in which men are represented as knowing God, i. e. having the truth, and yet acting wickedly.

(19) *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them*, &c. The apostle's object being to prove that the Gentiles are justly chargeable with impiety, he commences by showing that they have not the excuse of ignorance, since all men have enjoyed a competent revelation of the divine character. This he introduces naturally by means of the associating idea contained in the last clause of v. 18, 'men are wicked in their opposition to the truth *since* they have a revelation sufficient to render them inexcusable.' *That which may be known.* Such is the common and proper meaning of the word here used, and which suits well the context. It is, therefore, to be preferred to another rendering, which is also philologically correct, according to which the word means *knowledge*, 'the knowledge of God is revealed,' &c. The words translated *in them* may be rendered *to them*, or *among them*. The first is to be preferred, as it is more natural and more forcible. It is not an external revelation, merely, of which the apostle is speaking, but of that witness of the existence and perfections of God, also, which every man has in the constitution of his own nature ; and in virtue of which alone he is competent to appreciate the manifestations of God in his works. *For God hath showed it unto them.* The knowledge in question is a revelation. It is a manifestation of God in them and to them. The revelation to which Paul specially refers is that which is made in the external world, and for the right apprehension of which God has fashioned our nature.

(20) *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead*, &c. This verse is a confirmation and illustration of the preceding. The knowledge of which Paul speaks relates to the invisible things of God ; that is, to his eternal power and Godhead. These things, Paul says, are seen, though invisible, by their manifesta-

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tion in the external world. This manifestation is perpetual and universal. It is *from the creation of the world.* These words may indeed be rendered *by the creation*, &c., but not consistently with the latter part of the verse; nor do they, when thus rendered, give so pertinent a sense. These invisible things are seen, *being understood;* that is, it is a mental vision of which Paul speaks. The eye of sense sees nothing but the external object, the mind sees mind; and mind possessed not of human power and perfections, but of eternal power and divinity. The word rendered *divinity* means the divine majesty and excellence, and therefore includes all the perfections of God. These perfections are manifested *by the things which are made;* so the word here used properly means, see Eph. 2: 10; but it may also mean *works* generally. 'Being understood by his *works*,' would then include the dispensations of his providence, as well as the products of his hands. The common version, however, is more natural and appropriate. *So that they are without excuse.* These words are by many considered as depending on the last clause of v. 19, 'God hath showed it unto them, so that they are without excuse.' The former part of this verse is thus thrown into a parenthesis. The sense remains the same. God has so manifested himself in his works as to render the impiety, and especially the idolatry, of men inexcusable. It is not necessary to maintain that this revelation is competent to supply all the knowledge which a sinner needs. It is enough that it renders men inexcusable; and as it is that by which they are to be judged, ch. 2: 14, 15; if it be disregarded, it renders their condemnation as just, although not so severe, as the condemnation of those who disregard the clearer light of the gospel. The sentiment of this verse occurs in Acts 14: 17, "Nevertheless, he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

(21) *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful*, &c. That men are justly chargeable with impiety, Paul proves, because they had a competent knowledge of God, but did not act agreeably to it. *When they knew* means either having the opportunity of knowing, or actually possessing this knowledge. The latter is probably the apostle's meaning. God has revealed himself in the constitution of human nature, and in his works, to all men. This revelation is indeed greatly and generally neglected; and other and delusive guides followed, so that the heathen are commonly ignorant of what it teaches. In like manner the Bible is neglected, and those to whom it is sent, disregarding its directions, follow those who teach for doctrines the commandments of men. In both cases, however, there is knowledge presented, and a revelation made; and in both ignorance is without excuse. As there is no apology for the impiety of the heathen to be found in any unavoidable ignorance of God, their idolatry is the fruit of depravity. The apostle, therefore, says when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful. These two ex-

pressions include every act of worship. The former refers to the recognition of all the divine perfections, the latter to the acknowledgment of God as the source of all good. To regard God as possessed of all excellence, and as the giver of all good, is true piety.

Instead of thus rendering unto God the homage and gratitude which are his due, *they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.* 'They became vain,' i. e. foolish, senseless, devoid of true wisdom. "In their *imaginations*," or *opinions.* The word here used often occurs in a bad sense, 2 Cor. 10 : 5. Prov. 6 : 18. Jer. 11 : 19. And, in this case, it is the foolish and wicked opinions respecting divine things into which the heathen were sunk, that are intended.

Their foolish heart was darkened. 'Their soul lost all right apprehensions of the divine character and perfections, and they were, hence, able to worship, as gods, birds, beasts, and creeping things.' *Foolish* means both *senseless* and *wicked*, see v. 31, and ch. 10 : 19. Throughout the Scriptures the ideas of wickedness and folly, of wisdom and piety are intimately related. In scriptural language a *fool* is a wicked man, the wise are the pious ; foolishness is sin, and wisdom is piety. "Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding."—Prov. 4 : 7. 3 : 13, 35, &c. &c. The vanity, therefore, of which the apostle speaks, as consequent on the loss of the knowledge of God, is not mere folly ; it expresses the whole moral character of the heathen. Men cannot be *such* fools without being wicked : comp. ep. 4 : 17. 1 Pet. 1 : 18.

The word *heart* is used in this passage, and frequently elsewhere, for the whole soul. Men "understand with the heart," Matt. 13 : 15 ; they "believe with the heart," Rom. 10 : 10 ; "the heart is enlightened with knowledge," 2 Cor. 4 : 6, &c. The Scriptures do not make the broad distinction between the intellectual and moral faculties, which philosophers have adopted. As they speak of the heart as the source of purely intellectual exercises, so they use the word *understanding* or *mind* for the seat of the affections.

(22) *Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools.* The word translated *professing*, means either simply *affirming*, *saying*, Acts 25 : 19, or *boasting*, *pretending to be.* The latter is its meaning here. 'While making the highest pretensions to wisdom, they exhibited the greatest folly.' The evidence and illustration of this remark follows in the next verse. That rational creatures, instead of reverencing the God who reveals himself in all his works, should worship creatures inferior to themselves, even brute beasts, and offensive reptiles, is the most humbling and melancholy evidence of the imbecility and ruin of our race. It is to be remarked, also, that the higher the advancement of the nations in refinement and philosophy, the greater, as a general rule, the degradation and folly of their systems of religion. Witness the state of opinion and practice on this subject among the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, in comparison with the simpler faith of earlier nations, or of the abori-

gines of America. The further men have departed from the teachings of divine revelation, however made, and the more they have relied on their own understanding, the more deplorably besotted and foolish have they become. And it matters little under what external circumstances this departure is made, the result is always the same. In the midst of all the light of modern science, and of the reflection from the word of God which illuminates the whole atmosphere, the modern materialists of France, and pantheistical idealists of Germany, while professing themselves to be wise, have become fools, as conspicuously and as fully as any of the ancient deniers of the only living and true God; and for the very same reason: 'they do not like to retain God in their knowledge.'

(23) *And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man*, &c. Herein consisted their amazing folly, that they should worship the lowest of his creatures instead of the glorious Creator. *The glory of the incorruptible God* is equivalent to *the glorious incorruptible God*. The phrase rendered *change the glory into*, &c. may more correctly be rendered *exchanged the glory for*, &c. 'They exchange the glorious God for senseless idols.' Compare Ps. 106: 20, which may be translated, 'they exchanged their glory for the similitude of an ox that eateth grass;' Jer. 2: 11, "my people have changed their glory for *that which* doth not profit;" Hosea 4: 7. Greater folly than this exchange of the living and glorious God for the mere image of birds, beasts, and reptiles, the world has never seen. That the heathen really worshipped such objects is well known. Philo says that the whole land of Egypt was covered with temples and groves, dedicated to dogs, wolves, lions, land and water animals, crocodiles, birds, &c. With regard to the vast majority of the people, the homage terminated on the animal or the idol; and the case was but little better with the pantheistical refiners and defenders of this system, who professed to worship the great and universal divine principle, in these particular manifestations. Why should the higher manifestation of God in the human soul, do homage to the lower development of the universal principle in a reptile? We never find the sacred writers making any account of this common subterfuge and apology for idolatry. All who bowed down before a stock or stone, they denounced as worshipping gods which their own hands had made, which had eyes but saw not, ears but heard not, and hands that could not save.

The universal idolatry of the heathen world, committed under a degree of light which rendered it inexcusable, is the evidence which Paul adduces to prove that they are "ungodly," and consequently exposed to the wrath of God. In the passage which follows, from v. 24 to the end of the chapter, he designs to show that the Gentiles are not only ungodly but unrighteous. He traces their immorality to their impiety.

(24) *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts*, &c. They having abandoned God, he abandoned them. He not only permitted them to take their course, but he judicially, that is, as a punishment, withdrew and withheld the restraints of his pro-

vidence and Spirit, and gave them up to the dominion of their own wicked passions. The construction of this verse is rather doubtful. It may be construed, as by our translators, 'he delivered them to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts,' or 'he gave them up to the unclean lusts of their hearts;' the words rendered *unto uncleanness* being then made to qualify the word for *lusts* or *desires;* see vs. 26, 28, for the same construction. *To dishonour their own bodies between themselves.* This infinitive *to dishonour* (which in the Greek has the article in the genitive before it) may be simply explanatory of the word *uncleanness*, 'the uncleanness of dishonouring their bodies,' i. e. which consisted therein; or it may express the *object* or *result*. Here, of course, the latter view of the passage is to be preferred, 'so that they dishonoured,' &c. The natural consequence of turning from God is the destruction of all the better governing feelings of our nature; so that there is nothing to restrain us from sinking into the most degrading vices. The soul, when turned from God, is turned from its only proper object and portion, and therefore is destitute of support and restraint. The same sentiment which is expressed in this and the preceding verses, is repeated in those which immediately follow.

(25) *Who changed the truth of God into a lie*, &c. 'God delivered them up, *because they were such as those* who changed.' The connexion between this verse and the preceding one is thus obvious. This verse may be better rendered 'who exchanged the truth of God for a lie,' see v. 23. The *truth of God* may mean *the true God;* and *a lie*, a *false god*, which is a lie, a mere deception. The word is applied to any thing which is not what it professes, or is supposed to be. Hence, false doctrines are called a lie, 2 Thess. 2: 11; and false gods, in the Old Testament, are also so called, compare Jer. 13: 25. Ps. 31: 6. The sense of the passage would then be, 'who exchange the true, for a false god.' Or the passage may mean 'who exchange the truth concerning God, for a false conception of his character.' The general idea is, in either case, the same. *And worship and serve the creature more than the Creator.* This clause is an amplification of the preceding. They exchanged the true God for idols, and worshipped the creature rather than Creator. *Worship and serve;* the former of these words refers more directly to the inward homage of the heart, and the latter, to the outward expression of it. The word rendered *more than* may be rendered *rather than*, 'They worshipped the creature instead of the Creator.' When the sacred writers speak of God as neglected or insulted by men, they commonly add an expression of reverence and pious awe, as well to show the wickedness of those who forsake such a God, as to relieve their own hearts. Thus Paul renders clearer the sin of those who worship the creature rather than the Creator, by declaring him to be worthy of all praise. *Who is blessed for ever. Amen. Blessed*, i. e. worthy to be praised, or reverenced. *Amen* is a Hebrew word, signifying *true*, and also *truth*. When used adverbially at the beginning of a sentence, it expresses affirmation or assurance, *verily:* at the end, it expresses desire or approbation, *so let it be*, or *it is true*. It is

therefore employed to express assent to the prayers offered by one in the name of others.

(26) *For for this cause God gave them up to vile affections*, &c. This verse repeats, in a more definite form, the idea of v. 24. The reasons why Paul refers in the first instance to the sins of uncleanness, in illustration and proof of the degradation of the heathen, probably are, 1. That these sins are always intimately connected with idolatry, forming often even a part of the worship rendered to the false gods; 2. That in turning from the pleasures of holiness, or intercourse with God, men naturally turn to the pleasures of sense; 3. That these sins are peculiarly brutalizing, leading sooner to the destruction of all elevated feeling, and especially of all sense of divine things, than almost any other; 4. That they were the most notorious, prevalent, and openly acknowledged and defended of all the crimes of the heathen. As men degraded God, they also degraded themselves below the level of the beasts, by their devotion to worse than brutal passions.*

(27) This corruption of morals was confined to no one class or sex. Paul first refers to the degradation of females among the heathen, because they are always the last to be affected in the decay of morals; and, therefore, when they are abandoned, the very fountains of purity are corrupted. It is unnecessary to say more than that virtue has lost its hold on the female sex, in any community, to produce the conviction that it has already reached the lowest point of degradation.

Paul again presents the idea that this deep depravity of the heathen was the consequence and punishment of their abandonment of God. *Receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.* *Error* means aberration, a wandering from God, or truth, or virtue. Hence the word is used for *apostasy*, Ezek. 33: 10, and perhaps 2 Pet. 2: 18; for *deceit*, and also *wickedness generally*, James 5: 20. Jude 11. Here, from the context, the first meaning appears to be the best. It was wandering from God which brought them to such degradation. "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed," 1 Sam. 2: 30. According to another interpretation, the *error* here intended is the commission of the unnatural crimes just spoken of; and *the recompense* the natural evils consequent upon them. This also gives a good sense, but not so consistent with the drift of the whole passage.

(28) *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind*, &c. Another repetition of the sentiment of vs. 24, 26, that those who abandon God, he also abandons. *To have in knowledge* is a stronger expression than *to know*. 'They did not deem it worth while to retain the knowledge of God.' The ground form

* How common the crimes mentioned in this and the following verse were, may be inferred from the declaration of Martial, that no one was so timidly modest as to fear being detected in their commission. See GROTIUS on v. 27.

of the verb rendered *they did not like* means, 1. *To test or prove*; 2. *To approve, to judge worthy*, 1 Cor. 16: 3, "whom ye shall approve;" 3. *To discern* or *decide upon*. The second signification seems best suited to this passage. 'They did not think it of any account to retain the knowledge of the true God.'

Reprobate mind. The word for *reprobate* is derived from the same root with the verb just spoken of. There is, therefore, a correspondence between the terms which is not preserved in our version. 'As they did not approve of God, he gave them up to a mind which no one could approve.' The word literally means *that which cannot bear the test*; see 1 Cor. 9: 27. 2 Cor. 13: 5—7. It is applied, therefore, to any thing which is actually rejected, or is worthy of universal disapprobation. This is its meaning generally, if not universally, in common Greek, as well as in the New Testament.

To do those things which are not convenient. This is the consequence of the dereliction just spoken of, and the natural fruit of a reprobate mind. *Things not convenient* are things which are not becoming the nature or duties of man. They include all the crimes enumerated in the following verses.

(29—31) *Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness,* &c. These and other crimes were not of rare occurrence. The heathen *were filled* with them. They not only abounded, but in many cases were palliated, and even justified. To their existence and prevalence, therefore, Paul appeals as to a notorious fact. Dark as the picture here drawn is of the morals of the heathen world, it is not so dark as that drawn by the most distinguished Greek and Latin authors of their respective countrymen. On the two preceding verses, and on every word in those which follow to v. 32, Wetstein and Grotius quote even *ad nauseam* from ancient writers, passages which more than bear out the dreadful charges of the apostle. See also Leland's Work on the Necessity for a Divine Revelation, and Tholuck's Dissertation on the Morals of the Heathen, &c., translated for the Biblical Repository, Vol. II. What Paul says of the ancient heathen is found to be true, in all its essential features, of those of our own day. It is an interesting fact that the missionaries in the East Indies have frequently been accused by the heathen of having forged the whole of the latter part of this chapter. They cannot believe that such an accurate description of themselves could have been written eighteen centuries ago. Wherever men have existed there have they manifested themselves to be sinners, ungodly, and unrighteous, and consequently justly exposed to the wrath of God.

(32) *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* As Paul had before showed that the impiety of the heathen is inexcusable, inasmuch as they have a knowledge of God, so he here shows that their immorality is equally without defence. These crimes are not committed ignorantly. They know the *judgment of God.* The

word rendered *judgment*, as well as the corresponding Hebrew term, is used in a very wide sense in the Scriptures, for any thing which God has ordained or commanded; as in the frequent phrase, "thy judgments," in the Old Testament. Hence it includes the law of God. This is its meaning here, 'they know the law of God—what he has commanded;' see Luke 1: 6. Rom. 2: 26. They are acquainted not only with the precept, but the sanction of this law; they know not only that these crimes are forbidden, but that those who do them *are worthy of death*. *Death* here, as often elsewhere, means the penalty of the law, all those evils by which sin is punished, Rom. 6: 23. The idea, therefore, is, that the heathen know that they deserve punishment for their crimes; in other words, that they are justly exposed to the wrath of God. How they know this, Paul does not here say, but explains in the next chap. v. 14. It was a knowledge written upon their hearts, or included in the very constitution of their nature; it was implied in their being moral beings. The crimes of the heathen were not only aggravated by being committed against a knowledge of their turpitude and ill desert, but also by their being deliberate. They did not commit such offences in the heat of passion merely, but they took pleasure in those who did them. They were of set purpose and fixed preference, wicked; and the promoters of all iniquity. Such is Paul's argument to prove that the Gentiles are all under sin, are justly chargeable with impiety and immorality, and consequently exposed to the divine displeasure.

DOCTRINES.

1. The punitive justice of God is an essential attribute of his nature. This attribute renders the punishment of sin necessary, and is the foundation of the need of a vicarious atonement, in order to the pardon of sinners. This doctrine the apostle assumes as a first principle, and makes the basis of his whole exposition of the doctrine of justification, v. 18.

2. That sin is a proper object of punishment, and that, under the righteous government of God, it shall be punished, are moral axioms, which have 'a self-evidencing light,' whenever proposed to the moral sense of men, vs. 18, 32.

3. God has never left himself without a witness among his rational creatures. Both in reference to his own nature and to the rule of duty, he has, in his works and in the human heart, given sufficient light to render the impiety and immorality of men inexcusable, vs. 19, 20, 32.

4. Natural religion is not a sufficient guide to salvation. What individual or what nation has it ever led to right views of God or of his law? The experience of the whole world, under all the variety of circumstances in which men have existed, proves its insufficiency, and consequently the necessity of a special divine revelation, vs. 21—23.

5. The heathen, who have only the revelation of God in his works and in their own hearts, aided by the obscure traditionary knowledge which

has come down to them, need the gospel. In point of fact, the light which they enjoy does not lead them to God and holiness, vs. 21—23.

6. Error (on moral and religious subjects) has its root in depravity. Men are ignorant of God and duty, because they do not like to retain him in their knowledge, vs. 21, 28.

7. God often punishes one sin by abandoning the sinner to the commission of others. Paul repeats this idea three times, vs. 24, 26, 28. This judicial abandonment is consistent with the holiness of God, and the free agency of man. God does not impel or entice to evil. He ceases to restrain. He says of the sinner, Let him alone, vs. 24—28.

8. Religion is the only true foundation, and the only effectual safeguard of morality. Those who abandon God, he abandons. Irreligion and immorality, therefore, have ever been found inseparably connected, vs. 24—28.

9. It evinces, in general, greater depravity to encourage others in the commission of crimes, and to rejoice in their commission, than to commit them one's self, v. 32.

10. The most reprobate sinner carries about with him a knowledge of his just exposure to the wrath of God. Conscience can never be entirely extirpated, v. 32.

REMARKS.

1. It lies in the very nature of sin, that it should be inexcusable, and worthy of punishment. Instead, therefore, of palliating its enormity, we should endeavour to escape from its penalty, vs. 18, 32.

2. As the works of God reveal his eternal power and Godhead, we should accustom ourselves to see in them the manifestations of his perfections, vs. 18—21.

3. The human intellect is as erring as the human heart. We can no more find truth than holiness when estranged from God; even as we lose both light and heat when we depart from the sun. Those, in every age, have sunk deepest into folly, who have relied most on their own understandings. 'In thy light only, O God, can we see light,' v. 21, &c.

4. If the sins of the heathen, committed under the feeble light of nature, are inexcusable, how great must be the aggravation of those committed under the light of the Scriptures! v. 20.

5. As the light of nature is insufficient to lead the heathen to God and holiness, it is one of the most obvious and urgent of duties to send them the light of the Bible, v. 20—23.

6. Men should remember that their security from open and gross sins is not in themselves, but in God; and they should regard as the worst of punishments, his withdrawing from them his Holy Spirit, v. 24—28.

7. Sins of uncleanness are peculiarly debasing and demoralizing. To be preserved from them is mentioned in Scripture as a mark of the divine

favour, Eccl. 7: 26. Prov. 22: 14; to be abandoned to them, as the mark of reprobation.

8. To take pleasure in those who do good makes us better, as to delight in those who do evil is the surest way to become even more degraded than they are themselves, v. 32

CHAPTER II.

CONTENTS.

THE object of this chapter is to establish the same charges against the Jews, which had just been proved against the Gentiles, and to show that they also were exposed to the wrath of God. It consists of three parts. The first contains an exhibition of those simple principles of justice upon which all men are to be judged, vs. 1—16. The second is an application of these principles to the case of the Jews, vs. 17—24. The third is an exhibition of the true nature and design of circumcision, intended to show that the Jews could not expect exemption on the ground of that rite, vs. 25—29.

CHAP. 2: 1—16.

[1]Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. [2]But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. [3]And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? [4]Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? [5]But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; [6]who will render to every man according to his deeds: [7]to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: [8]but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, [9]tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; [10]but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: [11]for there is no respect of persons with God. [12]For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; [13](for not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. [14]For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things con-

tained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: [15]which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) [16]in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

ANALYSIS.

That men so impious and immoral, as those described in the preceding chapter, deserved the divine displeasure, and could never, by their own works, secure the favour of God, the Jew was prepared readily to admit. But might there not be a set of men, who, in virtue of some promise on the part of God, or of the performance of some special duties, could claim exemption from the execution of God's purpose to punish all sin? To determine this point, it was necessary to consider a little more fully the justice of God, in order to see whether it admitted of impunity to sinners on the ground supposed. The first section of this chapter, therefore, is employed in expanding the principle of v. 18 of the first chapter. It contains a development of those principles of justice which commend themselves at once to every man's conscience. The first is, that he who condemns in others what he does himself, does thereby condemn himself, v. 1. The second, that God's judgments are according to the truth or real state of the case, v. 2. The third, that the special goodness of God, manifested towards any individual or people, forms no ground of exemption from merited punishment, but being designed to lead them to repentance, when misimproved aggravates their condemnation, vs. 3—5. The fourth, that the ground of judgment are the works, not the external relations or professions of men; God will punish the wicked and reward the good, whether Jew or Gentile, without the least respect of persons, vs. 6—11. The fifth, that the standard of judgment is the light which men have severally enjoyed. Those having a written law shall be judged by it, and those who have only the law written on their hearts (and that the heathen have such a law is proved by the operations of conscience, vs. 13—15) shall be judged by that law, v. 12. These are the principles according to which all men are to be judged in the last day by Jesus Christ, v. 16.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest*, &c. In order to feel the force of the apostle's reasoning, it should be remembered that the principal ground on which the Jews expected acceptance with God, was the covenant of God with Abraham, in which he promised to be a God to him and his seed after him. This promise they understood as securing the salvation of all those who retained their relation to Abraham, by the observance of the law, and the rite of circumcision. They expected, therefore, to be treated as the favourites of God, and viewed, not so much in their own personal character, as in their rela-

tion to their great progenitor. We cannot sufficiently admire the skill with which Paul conducts his argument against this ground of confidence. He does not even name the Jew, and say, 'Therefore, O Jew, thou art inexcusable,' &c. He begins at such a distance, that the prejudices of his readers are not at all aroused. He states his principles so generally and so simply, that they must have forced the assent of the Jew, before he was at all aware of their application to himself. They are indeed self-evident, and yet, when admitted and applied, are found to be destructive of the very foundation on which the children of Abraham expected to inherit his blessing.

The connexion, indicated by the word *therefore* between this and the preceding chapter, is not very obvious. It may be explained thus: in v. 32, ch. 1, it is stated, that those who commit sin are conscious of its ill-desert; those, therefore, who condemn it, acknowledge still more clearly its desert of punishment, and, of consequence, condemn themselves, if they are chargeable with it; or to state the same view in a rather different form, 'Those who commit sin are worthy of death, much more those who encourage and delight in its commission, v. 32; and still more obviously than either, he who, while he condemns others, himself commits the same offence.'

Whosoever thou art that judgest. That the Jew is intended in this, and the following verses, is evident, from the drift of the argument, from his being expressly named in vs. 9, 10, and from the direct application of the argument to him in v. 17, and onward. It was, no doubt, with design, that the apostle made the address thus general in the first instance. The principle stated in the verse is true in relation to all men. The word rendered *to judge* means frequently *to condemn*, see v. 12. Acts 7: 7. 2 Thess. 2: 12, &c., and may be so rendered here, 'Thou art inexcusable whosoever thou art that condemnest, for wherein thou condemnest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that condemnest doest the same things.' The apostle wished to show that the ready sanction, which the Jew gave to the condemnation of the Gentile, involved the condemnation of himself, inasmuch as Jew and Gentile were to be judged by the same general principles.

The words rendered *in that* may mean *because that*, see ch. 8: 3; or, *in that*, eo ipso, in the very act of condemning another, thou condemnest thyself. The reason for this declaration follows, 'Because thou that condemnest doest the same things.' The ground of condemnation is the thing done, not the person of the agent. This is the first principle.

(2) *But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things.* The most probable interpretation of this verse is the following: 'However perverse your judgments are in condemning others, while you excuse yourself, we know that God's judgments are not thus partial. His decisions are according to the truth, are correct and just, and according to the real state of the case, and not the external circumstances or relations of those concerned;' see v. 11.

John 8: 15, 16, "Ye judge after the flesh; my judgment is true." The connexion between this and the previous verse is thus obvious, 'Ye judge one way, but God judgeth another.' The word rendered *judgment* often means *condemnation;* ch. 3: 8, "whose condemnation is just;" 1 Cor. 11: 29, 34, and frequently elsewhere. Its more general sense of judicial decision is more suitable, however, to this verse. This is the second principle. God's judgment is according to the truth, impartial, and founded upon the real character and conduct of men.

(3) *And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things,* &c. 'If God's judgments are impartial and just, how can those escape who commit the very things which they condemn in others?' Paul's language includes the idea also, that if these things are condemned by men, how much more by a righteous God. The former, however, is the main point. It is preposterous to suppose that God will spare those who do what they are so ready to condemn others for doing.

(4, 5) *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance,* &c. Paul refers in this and the following verse to the common ground of security of the Jews. They were God's peculiar people; his goodness towards them proved that he would not deal with them as with others. That the Jews really entertained this opinion is evident, in the first place, from the apostle's argument here and in the next chapter, and in other parts of his writings, see ch. 9 and 11; from such expressions as those in Matt. 3: 9, "Think not to say, we have Abraham for our father," John 8: 33; and from numerous declarations of the Jewish writers themselves on this subject.

The connexion is distinctly marked by the particle *or;* 'Or admitting the general principle, that those, who do what they condemn in others, are themselves exposed to condemnation: do you so abuse the divine goodness, as to suppose it will afford impunity in sin, when its real design is to lead you to repentance?' Those despise the goodness of God who pervert it, and derive from it a license to sin, supposing either that God will never punish, because he long delays, or that his goodness towards us is so peculiar that we shall escape, though others perish; see 2 Pet. 3: 8, 9. The use of the several terms, *goodness, forbearance,* and *long-suffering,* serves to express more strongly the idea of the divine mercy. The word rendered *riches* is a favourite term with the sacred writers, to express the idea of abundance or greatness, 2 Cor. 8: 2. Eph. 1: 7. 2: 7, &c. The word for *goodness* is a general term, expressive of mildness and kindness; that rendered *forbearance* signifies *patience* under suffering, and also under provocation. It is used also for a *truce* or *respite,* 1 Macc. 12: 25. It expresses here God's long delay of punishment. *Long-suffering,* slowness to anger. *Not knowing,* i. e. not regarding or considering 'that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance,' i. e. is designed and adapted to produce this effect.

(5) *But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath,* &c. The mercies and advantages of the Jews, and the pecu-

liar forbearance of God toward them, so far from being an evidence that God would ultimately spare them, would, by being abused, greatly aggravate their condemnation. "*After* thy hardness," &c. i. e. '*through*, or *on account of* thy hard and impenitent heart;' see Eph. 1: 5, 7. 3: 3, &c. The word rendered *to treasure* is used not only in reference to the hoarding up of things which are considered valuable, but also in the sense of accumulating or increasing one's stock of any thing good or bad; see Amos 3: 10. "*Treasurest* up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath;" literally *in the day*, i. e. upon the day; 'wrath on that day of wrath;' see v. 16. The abuse of God's mercies will cause an accumulation of the grounds of punishment on the day of judgment. This day is often called *the day of wrath;* the day of vengeance, because then shall the wrath of God be most conspicuously displayed. "That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness," Zeph. 1: 15. This is the day on which God's displeasure against all "ungodliness and unrighteousness," by whomsoever committed, shall be most signally displayed; and when God's righteous judgment, and the fact that it is righteous, shall be most clearly revealed. These verses, therefore, contain a third important principle laid down by the apostle. The goodness of God can never secure impunity to sinners; and its abuse will be sure to aggravate their guilt and punishment.

(6) *Who will render to every man according to his deeds.* In this and the following verses, to the 11th, the important truth is taught, that the ground of the judgment of God is the works of men, not their relations or professions. Stress must be laid upon both members of the verse; God will render to *every one*, Jew as well as Gentile, according *to his works*, in opposition to any other ground of judgment.

(7) *To them, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.* The principle which is stated generally in the preceding verse is applied to the two great classes of men in this and the one following. 'God will render to every man according to his deeds; to the good he will render life; to the wicked tribulation and anguish.' This verse contains the description of the character and reward of the righteous. They are those whose affections and objects of pursuit are in heaven, "who seek glory and honour and immortality;" and who seek these things 'by well doing,' by the persevering performance of all duty. To such, God will render eternal life. It is not to the Jew as Jew, nor to Gentile as the Gentile, any more than it is to the Catholic, the Episcopalian, or the Presbyterian, as such, but to the good as good, whether belonging to one class or the other, that eternal life is to be awarded.

The word rendered *patient continuance* means often patience under afflictions, and also *constancy, perseverance.* Luke 8: 15, "who bring forth fruit with constancy;" see 1 Thess. 1: 3, the phrase "constancy of hope," for perseverance in hope; so in this verse "constancy of good

works" means constancy in the performance of good works; which is the meaning which our translation so well expresses. *Glory, honour, and immortality*, i. e. a glorious and honourable immortality, though the idea is much more forcibly expressed by the words as they stand in our version.

(8) *But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.* Here the apostle describes the character and reward of the wicked. They are contentious and disobedient; and their recompense is indignation and wrath. The sense of this verse is perfectly plain, although the construction in the original is not quite regular. The sentence, as connected with the preceding, would naturally be construed thus, 'But to the contentious (God will render) indignation and wrath.' As it stands it must be translated, 'to the contentious indignation and wrath shall be rendered;' which mode of construction is continued through the following verse. The phrase rendered *those who are contentious*, literally is *those who are of contention;* as 'those who are of faith' means believers; 'those who are of circumcision,' the circumcised, Acts 10: 45. Gal. 3: 7. Tit. 2: 8; see Phil. 1: 16, 17. The word for *contention*, and the corresponding verb, are used frequently in reference specially to contending with any one in the sense of resisting his authority. 1 Sam. 12: 14, 15, "and not rebel (Greek *contend*) against the commandment of the Lord;" Deut. 21: 20, "this our son is stubborn and rebellious (contentious), he will not obey our voice." So, in this case, *the contentious* are the rebellious; those who do not obey God or the truth. *The truth*, i. e. true religion, the true standard of moral and religious duty; see ch. 1: 18. *But obey unrighteousness.* Instead of obeying truth and holiness, they yield obedience to sin; unrighteousness being obviously taken in a wide sense for all that is morally wrong. *Indignation and wrath*, i. e. the greatest wrath. The former of the Greek words here used expresses sudden or temporary passion, and the latter more permanent anger; or the former refers to the internal emotion, the latter to the outward expression of it. The words are here to be understood metonymically for the effects of indignation and wrath, that is, severe punishment. And this is explained in the next verse.

(9) *Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, &c.* Intensity, as is obvious, is expressed by the use of these nearly synonymous words, tribulation and anguish. *Every soul of man* is a common biblical expression. The Greek and Hebrew words for *soul* are familiarly used for *person;* 'Let every soul,' i. e. every 'person,' ch. 13: 1. *To the Jew first and also the Gentile.* It becomes now apparent that the apostle, in laying down these general principles of justice, by which the dealings of God are to be regulated, had the Jew specially in view. God, he says, will render to every man according to his works; to the good eternal life, to the evil tribulation and anguish. And lest the *every man* should fail to arrest attention, Paul says expressly that the Jew as

well as the Gentile is thus to be judged. The word *first*, here, may express either order or pre-eminence. According to the former view the meaning is, 'This judgment shall begin with the Jew, and be extended to the Gentiles;' see ch. 1: 16; according to the other, 'The Jew shall not only be punished as well as others, but, having been more highly favoured, his punishment shall be more severe.' In like manner, if the Jew is faithful, his reward will be the greater, as is intimated in the next verse. "The Jew first" is, therefore, equivalent to 'the Jew especially.' As both ideas are correct, both may have been intended by the apostle.

(10) *But glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.* This verse is the converse of the preceding. These verses state that, with regard to all men, the judgment of God is determined by their works. This is the ground of decision with respect to all, because God is perfectly impartial.

(11) *For there is no respect of persons with God.* The word rendered *respect of persons*, and its cognates, Acts 10: 34. James 2: 9, are peculiar to the Hellenistic or Jewish Greek. They are derived from the phrase frequently occurring in the Old Testament, *to lift up*, or *to accept the face* (i. e. the person), in the sense of showing favour. This phrase is often used in a good sense. Gen. 19: 21, "See I have accepted thee" (i. e. thy face), Job 42: 8. So 'accepted or lifted up of face,' means one honoured or favoured, 2 Kings 5: 1. Isa. 3: 3, &c. Most frequently, and especially when spoken of judges, it is used in a bad sense. Lev. 19: 15, "Thou shalt not accept the person of the poor," Prov. 24: 23, &c. So in the New Testament, uniformly in the sense of improper partiality, Eph. 6: 9. Col. 3: 25. James 2: 1. This verse then contains the sentiment which is at the foundation of the declaration of the preceding verses. The Jews and Gentiles shall be treated on precisely the same principles, because God is perfectly impartial. There is no respect of persons with him.

(12) *For as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law.* In the preceding verse it was stated that God is impartial and just in all his judgments. This is confirmed, not only by the previous statement that he would judge every man according to his works, but also by the exhibition of the important principle announced in this verse. Men are to be judged by the light they have severally enjoyed. The ground of judgment is their works, the standard of judgment is their knowledge. *As many as have sinned without law*, that is, as appears from the context, without a special revelation of the divine will; see 1 Cor. 9: 21. *The law*, as used by the apostle, as will be seen hereafter, means *the rule of duty*, the will of God as revealed for our obedience; commonly, however, with special reference to the revelations made in the Scriptures. This is evidently the case here. *Shall perish without law*, that is, shall be punished by a different standard, to wit, by that against

which they have sinned. The word rendered *perish*, from its opposition to that used in the latter part of the verse, expresses the idea, 'being condemned, shall be punished.' *As many as have sinned in the law. In the law*, i. e. subject to the law, as to be *in the flesh*, ch. 7: 5. 8: 8, &c., is to be subject to the flesh; to be *in sin* is to be under its control; see ch. 3: 19, "What the law says, it says to those who are under the law," literally, *those in the law*, as here. The meaning, therefore, obviously is, 'Those who are under a special revelation of the will of God, and have sinned, &c. &c., *shall be judged by the law*.' *Judged*, i. e. *condemned*, as the word often means, and as the context here requires. *By the law*, i. e. by means of the law, by it as the rule or standard; see the same preposition so used, James 2: 12. 2 Cor. 8: 8. Paul no more asserts in this passage that all who have no revelation shall perish, than he does that all who have a revelation shall be condemned. He is not speaking of the actual destiny of either class, but of the rule by which men are to be judged.

(13) *For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.* The reason is here assigned for the declaration contained in the last clause of the preceding verse, 'Those who are under the law shall be judged by it, or punished according to it, *for* it is not the mere possession of the law, but obedience to it, which is of avail before God. The expression *hearers* of the law is used because *readers*, before the multiplication of books by the press, were comparatively few. Hence it was by hearing, rather than by reading, that knowledge was obtained. The phrase to be *just before God*, i. e. in his sight or estimation, serves to explain the other equivalent term at the end of the verse, *shall be justified.* Both are evidently forensic expressions, and mean, shall be regarded and treated as just or righteous in the sight of God. The apostle has evident reference to the opinion of the Jews, that being a Jew was enough to secure admission into heaven. When Paul says *the doers of the law* shall be justified, he is of course not to be understood as teaching, contrary to his own repeated declarations and arguments, that men are actually to be justified by obedience to the law. This is the very thing which he is labouring to prove impossible. The context renders his meaning plain. He is speaking not of the method of justification available for sinners, but of the principles on which all who are *out of Christ* are to be judged. They shall be judged impartially, according to their works, and agreeably to their knowledge of duty. On these principles no flesh living can be justified in the sight of God. The only way, as he afterwards teaches, to escape their application, is to confide in Christ, in virtue of whose death God can be just and yet justify the ungodly who believe in him.

Though this verse, with the 14th and 15th, form a parenthesis, as is evident from the 16th, which requires to be immediately connected with the 12th, yet they are intimately related to what immediately precedes. The 13th is the ground of what is asserted in the last clause of the 12th,

viz. that those who have sinned under a law shall be condemned by it; and vs. 14, 15, are the ground of the assertion, that those who have sinned without a revelation shall yet be punished, because, though they have no law, they are a law unto themselves.

(14) *For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things of the law*, &c. The word *for* does not indicate the connexion between this and the preceding verse, but between this and the first clause of the 12th, as just stated. 'The Gentiles are not excusable, although not amenable to the written law revealed to the Jews, since they have a law written upon their hearts, by which they shall be judged, and according to which they shall be punished.' In support of this assertion, the apostle appeals first to the moral acts of the heathen, as evincing a moral sense; and secondly, v. 15, to the operations of their conscience. *Do by nature the things of the law. To do the things of the law* is to do what the law prescribes. When they practise any of the virtues, or perform any moral acts, these acts are the evidence of a moral sense; they show that the Gentiles have a rule of right and wrong, and a feeling of obligation, or, in other words, that they are a law unto themselves. The absence of all moral acts in the lower animals shows that they have no law or sense of moral obligation. But men, no matter how diversified may be their circumstances, all evince that they are under a moral law.

Paul says, the heathen "do *by nature* the things of the law." The word rendered *nature* often signifies the natural constitution, innate tendency or disposition. This expression is common in all languages, and is used, as in this case by the apostle, to refer us to a source of acts independent of external causes and influences. When it is said that an animal is cruel by nature, it is meant that its cruelty is to be accounted for by its natural constitution, and not by imitation or example. When, therefore, the Gentiles are said 'to do by nature the things of the law,' it is meant that they have not been taught by others. It is neither by instruction nor example, but by their own innate sense of right and wrong, that they are directed. Having this natural sense of right and wrong, though destitute of a law externally revealed, they are a law unto themselves.

(15) *Who show the work of the law written on their hearts*, &c. The relative pronouns, when used in this way at the beginning of a clause, are often intended to introduce a reason for a preceding declaration. So here, the Gentiles are a law unto themselves, *because* they show the work of the law, &c.; see ch. 1: 25. 2 Cor. 8: 10, &c. The expression *work of the law* may either mean the 'effect of the law,' viz. a knowledge of duty; or it may be a mere paraphrase for the law itself. Compare the somewhat similar expressions "work of the ministry," Eph. 4: 12; "work of faith," 1 Thess. 1: 3, though in neither of these cases is the word properly redundant. Paul says the Gentiles *show* that this law is written on their hearts by their actions, as stated in the previous verse.

There is another source of proof as to the existence of this internal law

their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another. The former of these clauses may mean either 'their conscience bearing witness to this law written in their hearts, i. e. assenting to it, and confirming it;' or, what is better suited to the force of the word, 'their conscience bears the same testimony with their acts; it joins to prove that they are a law unto themselves.' *Conscience* is then obviously put for its exercises. Paul appeals both to the conduct and inward experience of the Gentiles in proof of his position, that they are not destitute of a rule of duty.

The other clause of this verse is very variously explained. The word rendered *in the mean while* is sometimes an adverb, and sometimes a preposition. Our translators take it here as the former. The sense then is, 'Their conscience, and *then* their thoughts or moral judgments of approval or disapproval;' or 'their conscience bears witness, and *hereafter* their thoughts (principles) shall approve or condemn them.' But the word is so intimately connected with the genitive which follows, that it seems much more natural to take it as a preposition; as in Matt. 18: 15, "Tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Acts 15: 9, "And put no difference between us and them," &c. 'Their thoughts between themselves, accusing or excusing;' that is, 'their moral judgments alternately approving or condemning.' This clause may be considered as merely an amplification of the previous one, so that the testimony of conscience is made to consist in these approving and disapproving judgments; or it may be considered as co-ordinate with it, and as containing another proof of the apostle's general position, that the Gentiles are a law unto themselves. There are, then, three arguments presented in favour of this position, the moral conduct of the heathen, their general moral sense, and these special acts of self-approbation and self-accusing. The use of the word *and*, between the second and third clauses, is rather in favour of this latter view.

(16) *In the day that God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.* This verse, according to the common and most natural interpretation, is to be connected with v. 12. Verses 13, 14, 15, although intimately related to the 12th, are yet evidently a parenthesis. Paul had said that those who had no law should be punished without reference to the written law, and that those who were subject to such a law should be judged by it, v. 12. He now adds, v. 16, that this is to be done on the last day, the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, &c. *The secrets of men*, not their works of parade, done to be seen and admired, but those hidden deeds of heart and life, which form the true criterion of character. Thus simply does he describe the great day, the day of judgment. This judgment shall be conducted by Jesus Christ, agreeably to our Saviour's own declaration, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" see Acts 17: 31. The fact that there is to be such a day of trial, and that Jesus Christ is to be the judge, is part of the revelation contained in the gospel. Paul

therefore adds, *according to my gospel*, which of course cannot mean that all men are to be judged by the gospel, whether they have heard it or not. This would be in direct contradiction to the principle which he had just been establishing, that men are to be judged by the light they severally possess. The meaning is, that the fact of a final and righteous judgment is part of the revelation of the gospel.

Such then are the principles on which Paul assures us that all men are to be judged. They commend themselves irresistibly to every man's conscience as soon as they are announced, and yet every false hope of heaven is founded on their denial or neglect.

DOCTRINES.

1. The leading doctrine of this section is, that God is just. His judgments are infinitely removed above all those disturbing causes of ignorance and partiality by which the decisions of men are perverted, vs. 1—16.

2. The refuge which men are always disposed to seek in their supposed advantages of ecclesiastical connexion, as belonging to the true church, &c. &c., is a vain refuge. God deals with men according to their real character, vs. 2, 3.

3. The goodness of God has both the design and tendency to lead men to repentance. If it fails, the fault must be their own, v. 4.

4. It is a great abuse of the divine goodness and forbearance to derive encouragement from them to continue in sin. Such conduct will certainly aggravate our condemnation, vs. 3—5.

5. None but the truly good, no matter what the professions, connexions, or expectations of others may be, shall be saved; and none but the truly wicked, whether Gentile or Jew, Christian or heathen, shall be lost, vs. 6—10.

6. The goodness which the Scriptures approve consists, in a great degree, in the pursuit of heavenly things; it is a seeking after glory, honour, and immortality, by a persevering continuance in well-doing. It is the pursuit of the true end of our being by the proper means, v. 7.

7. The responsibility of men being very different in this world, their rewards and punishments will, in all probability, be very different in the next. Those who knew not their Lord's will shall be beaten with few stripes. And those who are faithful in the use of ten talents shall be made rulers over ten cities, vs. 9, 10.

8. The heathen are not be judged by a revelation of which they never heard. But as they enjoy a revelation of the divine character in the works of creation, ch. 1: 19, 20, and of the rule of duty in their own hearts, vs. 14, 15, they are inexcusable. They can no more abide the test by which they are to be tried, than we can stand the application of the severer rule by which we are to be judged. Both classes, therefore, need a Saviour, v. 12.

9. The moral sense is an original part of our constitution, and not the result of education, v. 14.

10. Jesus Christ, who is to sit in judgment upon the secrets of all men, must be possessed of infinite knowledge, and therefore be divine, v. 16.

REMARKS.

1. The deceitfulness of the human heart is strikingly exhibited in the different judgments which men pass upon themselves and others; condemning in others what they excuse in themselves. And it not unfrequently happens that the most censorious are the most criminal, vs. 1, 3.

2. How does the goodness of God affect us? If it does not lead us to repentance, it will harden our hearts and aggravate our condemnation, vs. 4, 5.

3. Genuine repentance is produced by discoveries of God's mercy, legal repentance by fear of his justice, v. 4.

4. Any doctrine which tends to produce security in sin must be false. The proper effect of the enjoyment of peculiar advantages is to increase our sense of responsibility, and our gratitude to God, and not to make us suppose that we are his special favourites. God is no respecter of persons, vs. 3—10.

5. How vain the hopes of future blessedness, indulged by the immoral, founded upon the expectation either that God will not deal with them according to their works, or that the secrets of their hearts will not be discovered! vs. 6—10, 16.

6. If God is a just God, his wrath is not to be escaped by evasions, but in the way of his own appointment. If we have no righteousness of our own, we must seek that of the Saviour, vs. 1—16.

7. He who died for the sins of men is to sit in judgment upon sinners. How dreadful for those who reject his atonement! How delightful for those who confide in his merit! v. 16.

CHAP. 2: 17—29.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, 18 and knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; 19 and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. 21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? 22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? 23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. 25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be

a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. [26]There fore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? [27]And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? [28]For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision which is outward in the flesh: [29]but he *is* a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

ANALYSIS.

This section consists properly of two parts. The first, vs. 17—24, contains an application of the principles, laid down in the former section, to the case of the Jews. The second, vs. 25—29, is an exhibition of the nature and design of circumcision. The principal grounds of dependence on the part of the Jews were, 1. Their covenant relation to God. 2. Their superior advantages as to divine knowledge. 3. Their circumcision. Now if it is true that God will judge every man, Jew or Gentile, according to his works, and by the law which he has enjoyed, what will it avail any to say, 'We are Jews, we have the law, v. 17; we have superior knowledge, v. 18; we can act as guides and instructors to others, v. 19? This may all be very true, but are you less a thief merely because you condemn stealing? less an adulterer because you condemn adultery? or less a blasphemer because you abhor sacrilege? vs. 21, 22. This superior knowledge, instead of extenuating, only aggravates your guilt. While boasting of your advantages, you, by your sins, bring a reproach on God, vs. 23, 24. According to the first principles of justice, therefore, your condemnation will be no less certain, and far more severe than that of the Gentiles.' As to circumcision, to which the Jews attached so much importance, the apostle shows that it could avail nothing, except on condition of obedience to the law or covenant to which it belonged, v. 25. If the law is broken, circumcision is worthless, v. 25, latter clause. On the other hand, if the law is obeyed, the want of circumcision will not prevent a blessing, v. 26. More than this, if those less favourably situated than the Jews are found obedient, they will rise up in judgment against the disobedient, though favoured, people of God, v. 27. All this proves that an external rite can, in itself, have no saving power: because God is a Spirit, and requires and regards spiritual obedience alone. This principle is stated, first negatively, he is not a Jew who is such in profession merely, v. 29, and then affirmatively, he is a Jew who is one inwardly, v. 29.

COMMENTARY.

(17) *Behold thou art a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.* The main ground of confidence in the Jew was that he was one of the covenant people of God. To this, therefore, Paul first refers

Thou art called a Jew, i. e. one of the people of God. The word *Jew* is evidently taken here in its religious rather than its civil or national sense; it expresses the relation of the people to God rather than to other nations. A Jew, therefore, in opposition to a Gentile, was a member of the true church, a child of Abraham, &c. In this sense the word occurs again in vs. 28, 29. Rev. 2: 9, "I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and are not."

Restest in the law, i. e. reclinest upon it as a ground of confidence. The same word occurs in the Septuagint version of the strikingly analogous passage in Micah 3: 11, "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, the prophets thereof divine for money; yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us." This is precisely the spirit which Paul reproves, a reliance on external advantages, connected with security in sin. *The law* here means the whole civil and religious polity of the Jews; the Mosaic system, the possession of which made such a distinction between them and other nations, and conferred upon them such exalted privileges.

And makest thy boast of God. The words which are thus correctly rendered here, occur in a very different sense in ch. 5: 11, where they are translated *we joy in God.* The word rendered *to boast* is expressive of self-gratulation, with or without sufficient reason. It is therefore often used for vain boasting. Its meaning here is obvious. The Jews considered that they had reason for self-gratulation and exaltation in their peculiar relation to God. Their boast and confidence was that he was their God, and that they were his people.

(18) *And knowest his will, and approvest the things which are most excellent*, &c. The second ground of confidence was their superior knowledge. The Jews not only supposed themselves to stand in a more favourable relation to God than the Gentiles, but they regarded themselvesas personally greatly their superiors; having better knowledge of divine things, &c. On the ground of this superiority they expected to be treated with especial favour when they appeared before God. To this ground of confidence the apostle now refers. *Knowest his will*, 'art possessed of a divine revelation;' or, 'knowest what is pleasing to God.' The next clause may be rendered, either *thou approvest the things that are more excellent*; or *thou discernest* (*can decide about*) *the things which differ.* The usage of the Greek terms admit of either of these versions. The context is in favour of the latter, as the point in hand is the superior knowledge of the Jews, by which they were able to decide questions of duty which others could not, and hence thought themselves fit to be their guides and teachers. The same phrase occurs again, Phil. 1: 10, where it may be rendered as it is here.

(19, 20) *And art confident that thou thyself art a guide to the blind, and a light to them that are in darkness*, &c. What is expressed figuratively in this verse, is expressed literally in the one that follows—*an*

instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes. There is no trait of the Jewish character more prominently exhibited than their self-confident superiority to others. Hence their desire to make proselytes, their endless inculcation of the commands of men for the doctrines of God, their contempt of the Gentiles, &c. &c. Their Rabbins were in the habit of calling themselves 'the light of the world.' *Which hast the form of knowledge and truth in the law.* The word rendered *form* means the *external shape or appearance of a thing;* 2 Tim. 3: 5, "Having the form of godliness." It also signifies a just representation, and then a rule. The idea is, 'they have in the law a perfect representation of what truth and duty are,' or 'a perfect rule of moral truth.' The words "knowledge and truth," by a common figure, may mean *true knowledge;* or be equivalent to *knowledge of the truth.*

(21, 22) *Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?* &c. For the connexion of this verse with the 17th, see the note on that passage. We have here the application of the above reasoning to the hopes of the Jews. If men are to be judged *according to their works,* those who *do* wickedly, who steal, commit adultery and sacrilege, no matter whether they are called Jews, and make their boast in God, and are instructed out of the law, or not, shall assuredly be condemned. It is evident that the crimes of theft, adultery, and sacrilege are here specified, not as crimes which all the Jews committed, but as examples merely. 'If you, though Jews, do what you condemn in others, you will not escape the righteous judgment of God. So far from this, your superior advantages will increase the weight of your condemnation.' Paul intended forcibly to assert that the Jews were guilty of these and other crimes, and it matters little whether the interrogative or affirmative form of address be adopted; i. e. whether we read 'Dost thou steal?' or 'Thou dost steal, dost commit adultery,' &c. It is a mere matter of punctuation. The interrogation gives the assertion rather more point. It has been questioned whether the apostle, in charging the Jews with sacrilege, had reference to the specific crime of temple-robbery, or more generally to the wicked and profane abuse and perversion of sacred things. Most probably to the latter, because there is no historical evidence of temple-robbery having been committed by them; and because the prophets represent the withholding from God his due, and the appropriation of sacred things to a common use, as a robbery of God. Malachi 3: 8, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." While the Jews, therefore, abhorred idols, which was one form of showing contempt for God, they evinced, without compunction, their want of reverence for the divine Being, in ways scarcely less offensive. That this abhorrence of idolatry was characteristic of the Jews after the captivity, is one of the most familiar facts in their history; and it is as great now as at any former period.

(23, 24) *Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the*

law, dishonourest thou God? &c. Another striking instance of their not acting agreeably to their advantages, while making a boast of the law, and of their peculiar relation to God, as their God, and theirs only; instead of acting worthily of this relation, they so acted, that the name of God was every day blasphemed; that is, the Gentiles were constantly led to speak and think evil of a God, whose worshippers were so wicked as the Jews. This assertion he confirms by the declarations of their own prophets; see Ezek. 36: 20, 23.

(25) *For circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law*, &c. It had obviously been implied in the previous reasoning of the apostle, that the Jews, being chargeable with the sins just mentioned, could not escape the righteous judgment of God; *for* circumcision is of no account, unless the law be obeyed; if that is broken, circumcision is uncircumcision. The connexion between this and the preceding verses is thus obvious. The design of this passage, vs. 25—29, therefore, is to show that circumcision afforded no security to the Jews. This rite was regarded by the Hebrews, and is considered by the apostle under two different aspects. First, as a rite possessed of inherent efficacy or merit of its own; and, secondly, as a sign or seal of God's covenant. In the former view, Paul here, as well as elsewhere (see Gal. 6: 15), says, "circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing." In the latter, it had its legiti mate and important value. As a seal it was attached, in the first place to the national covenant between God and the Jews. It was a sign of the existence of that covenant, and a pledge, on the part of God, that he would fulfil its promises. If any Jew fulfilled his part of that covenant, and in that sense kept the law, his circumcision would profit him; it would secure to him all the blessings of Judaism. But it was also, in the second place, attached to the spiritual covenant made with Abraham. "It was a seal of the righteousness of faith," i. e. was designed as an assurance that he was regarded as righteous by means of his faith, and that he should be treated accordingly. To all those Jews who had the faith of Abraham, and thus kept the covenant, or law of justification, established with him, circumcision was in like manner profitable. It was the visible sign and pledge of the divine favour. On the other hand, if either the national or spiritual covenant were broken, circumcision was of no more use than the seal of a contract after all its binding parts had been obliterated. In other words, the validity of a covenant or contract depends on the performance of its conditions, not on the mere possession of its seal. Paul, therefore, tells the Jews that there was no inherent efficacy in circumcision, that it could avail them nothing unless they obeyed the law; if they were transgressors of the law, as he had just declared them to be, their circumcision was made uncircumcision. That is, it would do them no good; and though of the number of the people of God, they should be treated as though they were not.

(26) *Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?* In order to

present the nature of this rite in its true light, he reverses the statement of the previous verse. Circumcision cannot profit any one if the law is broken; and the want of it cannot invalidate the promise, if the law is kept. In other words circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God. The rite, in itself considered, is of no avail. If a man should faithfully perform all the conditions of a contract, the absence of the seal would not, in the judgment of equity, invalidate his claim, any more than the possession of the seal, while the conditions remained unperformed, would entitle him to the specified reward.

The word *uncircumcision*, in the beginning of the verse, obviously means an *uncircumcised person*, by a common metonymy, but, in the latter clause, it is to be taken literally. The *righteousness of the law*, 'the prescriptions of the law;' its various demands. Paul does not say that any heathen does fully answer the demands of the law, the case is merely stated hypothetically to show the little weight due to circumcision. The last clause, *his uncircumcision shall be counted for circumcision*, is an example of a very common Hebrew idiom; according to which the preposition here rendered *for* is placed after verbs signifying *to be*, *to become*, or *to be regarded*, where, in Greek, the nominative would be used. The apostle's meaning is obvious. 'The one shall be regarded and treated as though it were the other.'

(27) *And shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature, judge thee*, &c. As pointed and understood by our translators, this verse expresses more than the preceding one. The obedient Gentile would not only be accepted, although uncircumcised, but he would rise up and condemn the more favoured Jew. *Which is by nature*, i. e. which is natural. *Judge thee*, i. e. condemn thee, as this word is often used, see v. 1. Render thy condemnation and its justice more conspicuous. As the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south are to rise in judgment against the neglecters of Christ and his gospel and condemn them, Matt. 12: 41, 42. The Jew is here described as one 'who by the letter and circumcision transgresses the law.' The word for *letter* means not only an alphabetic character, but also any thing written; John 5: 47, "If they believe not his writings;" 2 Tim. 3: 15, "Thou hast known the sacred Scriptures." It means here the *written law*, see v. 29, and ch. 7: 6, "Not according to the oldness of the letter," i. e. the old written law; 2 Cor. 3: 6, "Hath made us ministers, not of the letter, but of the spirit," that is, 'not of the written law, but of the spiritual dispensation.' The preposition here rendered *by*, "by the letter and circumcision," may often be rendered *with*, and should be so translated here; 'Who with the letter and circumcision;' that is, 'who, although possessed of the letter, i. e. the written law, and circumcision, art a transgressor of the law;' see ch. 4: 11. Heb. 9: 14. The words "letter and circumcision" might, by a common figure, be taken to mean literal circumcision; but this is, in the

first place, unnecessary, and, in the second, not so well suited to the context, as nothing is said here of a spiritual circumcision, and as *the law* is too prominent a point in the advantages of the Jews to allow of the term which expresses it here, to be merged in a mere epithet.

(28, 29) *For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh*, &c. These verses assign the reason why the external rite of circumcision can avail so little. God regards the heart, and not the external circumstances of men. This sentiment is expressed, first negatively, v. 28, and then affirmatively, v. 29. The word *Jew* is here, as in v. 17, to be taken in its religious sense. He is not a Jew, or a child of God, who is such by profession only, or in external appearance. Neither is the circumcision which is outward, in the flesh, that on which the Scriptures lay so much stress, as when it is said, "I will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your children, to love the Lord thy God," Deut. 30: 6. The sign is nothing without the spiritual blessing which it signifies. *But he is a Jew which is one inwardly.* He only is really one of the people of God who is such in heart; see 1 Pet. 3: 4, where the word, which properly means *hidden, secret*, is also to be understood in the sense of *internal, inward. And circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter*, see Deut. 10: 16. The words *in the spirit, not in the letter*, are evidently explanatory of the circumcision of the heart of which the apostle is speaking; but they may be understood variously. *In the spirit* may mean *spiritual*, as relating to the spirit, and not to the body, and *in the letter* would then mean *literal*; 'Circumcision of the heart which is spiritual and not literal.' Or *in the spirit* may be rendered *by the Spirit*. This gives a better sense, 'Circumcision of the heart which is effected by the Spirit, and not made after the direction of the written law;' compare Col. 2: 11. According to this view, the word rendered *letter* retains the meaning it has in the preceding verses. The general sentiment, however, is in either case the same.

Whose praise is not of men, but of God. The word *whose* refers to the Jew just described. His excellence is internal, seen and acknowledged of God: not such as falls under the observation of men.

DOCTRINES.

1. Membership in the true church, considered as a visible society, is no security that we shall obtain the favour of God. The Jews, before the advent, were members of the true and only church, and yet Paul teaches they were not on that account the more acceptable to God. Multitudes of Jewish converts were members of the apostolic church, and yet, retaining their former doctrines and spirit, were in the gall of bitterness, v. 17.

2. Mere knowledge cannot commend us to God. It neither sanctifies the heart, nor of itself renders men more useful. When made the ground

of confidence, or the fuel of pride and arrogance, it is perverted and destructive, vs. 18—20.

3. Superior knowledge enhances the guilt of sin, and increases the certainty, necessity, and severity of punishment, without in itself increasing the power of resistance. It is, therefore, a great mistake to make knowledge our sole dependence in promoting the moral improvement of men, vs. 18—20.

4. The sins of the professing people of God are peculiarly offensive to him, and injurious to our fellow men, vs. 22—24.

5. Here, as in the former part of the chapter, the leading idea is, that God is just. He asks not whether a man is a Jew or a Gentile, a Greek or Barbarian, bond or free, but what is his character? Does he *do* good or evil? vs. 17—24.

6. According to the apostle, the true idea of a sacrament is not that it is a mystic rite, possessed of inherent efficacy, or conveying grace as a mere *opus operatum;* but that it is a seal and sign, designed to confirm our faith in the validity of the covenant to which it is attached; and, from its significant character, to present and illustrate some great spiritual truth, v. 25.

7. All hopes are vain which are founded on a participation of the sacraments of the church, even when they are of divine appointment, as circumcision, baptism, and the Lord's supper; much more when they are of human invention, as penance and extreme unction, vs. 26, 27.

8. Religion and religious services, to be acceptable to God, must be of the heart, mere external homage is of no account, vs. 28, 29.

REMARKS.

1. The sins and refuges of men are alike in all ages. The Jew expected salvation because he was a Jew, so does the Catholic because he is a Catholic, the Greek because he is a Greek, and so of others. Were it ever so certain that the church to which we belong is the true, apostolic, universal church, it remains no less certain that without holiness no man shall see God, v. 17, &c.

2. Having superior knowledge should make us anxious, first, to go right ourselves, and then to guide others right. To preach against evils which we ourselves commit, while it aggravates our guilt, is little likely to do others much good, v. 18, &c.

3. Christians should ever remember that they are the epistles of Jesus Christ, known and read of all men; that God is honoured by their holy living, and that his name is blasphemed when they act wickedly, vs. 23, 24.

4. Whenever true religion declines, the disposition to lay undue stress on external rites is increased. The Jews, when they lost their spirituality, supposed that circumcision had power to save them. 'Great is the virtue of circumcision,' they cried, 'no circumcised person enters hell.' The Christian church, when it lost its spirituality, taught that water in

baptism washed away sin. How large a part of nominal Christians rest all their hopes on the idea of the inherent efficacy of external rites! v. 25, &c.

5. While it is one dangerous extreme to make religion consist in the observance of external ceremonies, it is another to undervalue them, when of divine appointment. Paul does not say that circumcision was useless; he asserts its value. So, likewise, the Christian sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, are of the utmost importance, and to neglect or reject them is a great sin, v. 26, &c.

6. If the heart be right in the sight of God, it matters little what judgment men may form of us; and, on the other hand, the approbation of men is a poor substitute for the favour of God, v. 29.

CHAPTER III.

CONTENTS.

This chapter may be divided into three parts. The first contains a brief statement and refutation of the Jewish objections to the apostle's reasoning, vs. 1—8. The second, a confirmation of his doctrines from the testimony of Scripture; and a formal drawing out and declaration of his conclusion, that, 'by the works of the law no flesh living can be justified before God,' vs. 9—20. The third, an exposition of the gospel method of justification, vs. 21—31.

CHAP. 3: 1—8.

1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. 3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar, as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. 5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) 6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? 7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? 8 And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just.

ANALYSIS.

The first objection to Paul's reasoning here presented is, that according to his doctrine, the Jew has no advantage over the Gentile, v. 1. The apostle denies the correctness of this inference from what he had said,

and admits that the Jews have great advantages over all other people, v 2. The second objection is, that God having promised to be the God of the Jews, their unfaithfulness, even if admitted, does not release him from his engagements, or make his promise of no effect, v. 3. Paul, in answer, admits that the faithfulness of God must not be called in question, let what will happen, vs. 4, 5; but he shows that the principle on which the Jews expected exemption from punishment, viz. because their unrighteousness commended the righteousness of God, is false. This he proves by showing first, that if their principle was correct, God could not punish any one, Gentile or Jew, vs. 5, 6, 7; and secondly, that it would lead to the absurdity, that it is right to do evil that good may come, v. 8.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit* is there *of circumcision?* The conclusion at which the apostle had arrived at the close of the preceding chapter was, that the Jews, as well as Gentiles, are to be judged according to their works and by their knowledge of the divine will; and being thus judged, they are exposed to condemnation, notwithstanding their circumcision, and all other advantages. The most obvious objection to the mind of a Jew to this conclusion must have been, that it was inconsistent with the acknowledged privileges and superiority of his nation. This objection the apostle here presents. He states the difficulty himself, that he may have the opportunity of removing it. The word here rendered *advantage*, when used as a substantive, properly means *that which is over, the excess*, and then *pre-eminence, superiority*. This is its meaning here, 'what then is the pre-eminence of the Jew over the Gentile? according to your reasoning, there is no such thing;' compare, on this word, Matt. 5: 47. 11: 9. Luke 7: 26. The second interrogation in this verse is nearly equivalent to the first; as circumcision may be taken as the sign of Judaism, 'what is the profit of being a Jew?' Still as Paul had considered circumcision in the preceding chapter as a distinct ground of confidence, and as the Jews attributed to it so much importance, it is probably to be understood here of the rite itself.

(2) *Much every way: chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God.* This is the answer of the objection presented in the first verse. It consists in a denial of the correctness of the inference from the apostle's reasoning. It does not follow, because the Jews are to be judged according to their works, that there is no advantage in being the peculiar people of God, having a divine revelation, &c. &c. Paul, therefore, freely admits that the advantages of the Jews are great in every respect. The words rendered *chiefly* may be variously explained. They may, by supplying the verb *is*, be rendered 'the principal thing is;' see Luke 15: 22. 19: 47. Acts 25: 2. Or they may be taken, as by our translators, and rendered *chiefly, especially;* see Matt. 6: 33. 2 Pet. 1: 20; or what is perhaps more natural, *in the first place;* 'Their advantages are great, for first,' &c. That no enumeration follows, with *secondly*,

is no objection to this rendering, for Paul often fails to carry out an arrangement with which he commences; see 1 : 8. *Unto them were committed.* The construction of this clause, in the original, is one which frequently occurs in Paul's epistles; see 1 Cor. 9 : 17. Gal. 2 : 7. Titus 1 : 3. *The oracles of God.* The Greek word for *oracles* is often used, in a restricted sense, for oracular or prophetic declarations; but in the Old and New Testament it occurs frequently in its general sense, for *words, any thing spoken.* See Num. 24 : 4. Ps. 19 : 14, "let the words of my mouth," &c. Hence in reference to divine communications of any kind; see Acts 7 : 38. Heb. 5 : 12, "The first principles of the oracles of God," 1 Pet. 4 : 11. There is, therefore, no necessity for restricting the word here either to the prophecies or promises of God. It is to be understood of all his divine communications, i. e. of the Scriptures.

(3) *But what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?* This verse may express the sentiment of the apostle, or that of an objector. If the former, it may be explained thus: 'The advantages of the Jews are very great, and even if, as I have proved to be the case, many of them are unfaithful, this does not invalidate the promises of God, or render less conspicuous the favours which they have received at his hand. Of them the Messiah has been born; through them the true religion is to be spread abroad; and they, as a nation, shall be ultimately restored,' &c. But this interpretation does not suit the context, nor the drift of the apostle's reasoning.

It seems more natural to consider this verse as expressing the sentiment of an objector, and that which follows as the apostle's answer. The objection is, that Paul's doctrine of the exposure of the Jews to condemnation is inconsistent with God's promises. 'What if we have been unfaithful, or are as disobedient and wicked as you would make us appear, does that invalidate the promises of God? Must he be unfaithful too? Has he not promised to be our God, and that we should be his people? These are promises not suspended on our good or evil conduct.' In favour of this view it may be urged that it was obviously one of the great grounds of confidence of the Jews, that they were the peculiar people of God. Their great objection to Paul's applying his general principles of justice to their case was that they were not to be dealt with like other men. 'God has chosen us as his covenant people in Abraham. If we retain our relation to him by circumcision and the observance of the law, we shall never be treated or condemned as the Gentiles.' Traces of this opinion are to be seen in the New Testament, and its open avowal among the Jewish writers. Matt. 3 : 9, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father." John 8 : 33, "We be Abraham's seed." See ch. 2 : 17. 9 : 6, and other passages, in which Paul argues to prove that being the natural descendants of Abraham is not enough to secure the favour of God. That such was the doctrine of the Jews appears from many passages of their writings, and from the testimony of the early Christians. It was a favourite saying

of the Jews, "All Israel hath a portion in eternal life." Justin Martyr says, "They suppose that to them universally, who are of the seed of Abraham, no matter how sinful and disobedient to God they may be, the eternal kingdom shall be given." This interpretation, therefore, makes the verse in question present the objection which the Jews would be most likely to urge. A second consideration in its favour is, that the connexion with the following passage, vs. 4, 5, 6, is thus made much more natural and easy, as will appear from what follows. The words rendered *did not believe*, and *unbelief*, may, in perfect accordance with their meaning elsewhere, be rendered *were unfaithful*, and *unfaithfulness*. And this rendering is necessary to make the verse harmonious, and to express the apostle's meaning, 'What if some were unfaithful? Shall their unfaithfulness make the faithfulness of God without effect?' By the Jews being unfaithful, is not intended that they did not preserve the Scriptures which were committed to their care, but that they did not act agreeably to the relations in which they stood to God, were not faithful to their duties or advantages. It includes, therefore, every thing which the apostle had charged upon them as the ground of their condemnation. They were unfaithful to their part of the covenant between God and themselves.

4. *God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written*, &c. The objection presented in the preceding verse is, that the apostle's doctrine, as to the condemnation of the Jews, is inconsistent with the faithfulness of God. 'Is the faith of God without effect?' asks the objector. 'By no means,' answers the apostle; 'such is no fair inference from my doctrine; let God be true, and every man a liar. There is no breach of the promises of God involved in the condemnation of wicked Jews. Those promises were made not to the natural, but to the spiritual seed of Abraham, and will all be accomplished to the letter, and, therefore, are not inconsistent with the condemnation of the unbelieving Jew.' All this, which is stated and urged at length in chs. 9—11, is included in the strong denial of the apostle that what he had taught was inconsistent with the divine faithfulness.

God forbid. These words, which occur so often in our version, are a most unhappy rendering of the original, which means simply *let it not be*, equivalent, therefore, to *by no means*, or *far from it*. It is a mode of expression constantly used to express a strong denial. The Scriptures do not authorize such a use of the name of God, as this phrase shows to have been common among the English translators of the Bible. *True*, as used in this verse, means *faithful*, as the context shows, and as the term elsewhere signifies, John 3: 33, &c.; and *liar* expresses the opposite, *unfaithful*. The sentiment is, let God be, i. e. be seen and acknowledged as faithful, let the consequences be what they may. 'This must be true, whatever else is false.' This disposition to justify God under all circumstances, and at all events, Paul illustrates by the conduct of David, who acknowledged the justice of God in his own condemnation,

and confesses, "Against thee only have I sinned; that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged," i. e. that thy rectitude, under all circumstances, might be seen and acknowledged. In this quotation Paul follows the Septuagint translation of Ps. 51: 4. The Hebrew runs thus, 'That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.' The general sentiment is in either case the same, v. 12. God is just, and will always be found to be so.

(5) *But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? I speak as a man.* This is another cavilling objection of the Jew. 'Not only is God's fidelity pledged for our salvation, but the very fact of our being unrighteous will only render his righteousness the more conspicuous; and consequently it would be unjust in him to punish us for what glorifies himself.' This passage is somewhat obscure from being presented in the interrogative form, and from being the language of the apostle, though expressing the sentiment of an objector. It is obvious, however, that the point of the argument is, that God cannot consistently punish those whose unrighteousness serves to display his own rectitude. It is easy to perceive that these objections all suppose the Jew to have felt secure within the precincts of God's covenant with his forefathers. The fidelity of God rendered certain the bestowing of all promised blessings; and the unworthiness of the Jews, as it rendered the goodness and faithfulness of God the more conspicuous, was no reason why they should be condemned. The words *righteousness* and *unrighteousness* are generic terms, the one including all moral excellence, and the other just the reverse. What, therefore, before and after, is expressed by the more definite terms, *faithfulness* and *unfaithfulness*, *truth* and *falsehood*, is here expressed more generally. The word rendered *to commend* signifies either to recommend, as one person to another, Rom. 16: 1; or to exhibit in a conspicuous manner; see 5: 8, "God commendeth his love towards us;" 2 Cor. 7: 11, "in all things ye have exhibited yourselves as clear in this matter;" Gal. 2: 18, "I make myself (exhibit myself) as a transgressor." This is obviously the meaning of the word in this case. 'If our unrighteousness render the righteousness of God conspicuous, what shall we say? What inference is to be drawn from this fact? Are we to infer that God is unrighteous who taketh vengeance? Far from it.' The word for *vengeance* is that which, in ch. 1: 18, 2: 5, is rendered *wrath*, and here is obviously taken for its effect, i. e. *punishment*; 'who inflicts punishment.' In order to make it evident that he was not expressing his own sentiments in using the language of this verse, Paul adds, *I speak as a man.* This phrase, which means, in general, 'as men are accustomed to speak' (or act), is of frequent occurrence, and is variously modified as to its import by the context. It means, at times, 'in a manner adapted to the comprehension of men,' Rom. 6: 19; as when God is said to speak or act after the manner of men; or, secondly, 'as

men generally speak and act,' i. e. wickedly, 1 Cor. 3 : 3; or as introducing an example or illustration from common life, 1 Cor. 9 : 8. Gal. 3 : 15; or, as in this instance, to intimate that the writer is not uttering his own sentiments. 'I am not speaking in the character of an inspired man, but as others are accustomed to speak.' It was the Jew, and not the apostle, who argued that, because our wickedness rendered the goodness of God the more conspicuous, therefore he could not punish us. Paul, in answer to this reasoning, and to the question whether, under such circumstances, God is unrighteous in taking vengeance, says:

(6) *God forbid, for then how shall God judge the world?* The apostle denies that there is the least ground for this objection, and shows that, if it is well founded, God cannot judge the world at all. By the world is not to be understood any one class exclusively, but men in general; though the Gentiles may have been specially intended. It is obvious that all men would escape punishment, if the principle were once admitted that God cannot punish any whose wickedness might be the occasion of magnifying any of his perfections.

The word for *judge* may be taken either generally, 'how can he exercise the office of a judge over the world;' or in the sense of *condemning*, 'how can he condemn the world.' *The world* would then mean specially the heathen, as opposed to the Jews, the nominal people of God. This term is often used in opposition to the church, or followers of Jesus Christ, as in John 15 : 18, 'If the world hate you,' 'If ye were of the world,' &c. The former interpretation is, however, the more natural.

(7) *For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?* This is a repetition, in a more definite form, of the sentiment of the fifth verse. There the general terms righteousness and unrighteousness were used, here the more specific ones, *truth* and *falsehood*. The sentiment is the same. Paul assumes the person of the objector, and asks, 'Can I be justly treated as a sinner when, through my lie, or unfaithfulness to the covenant, the truth or fidelity of God is the more conspicuously displayed to his glory?' *The truth of God* may be taken as a general term of excellence; see 2 : 8, where *truth* is the opposite of *unrighteousness*; or, in the sense of *veracity*, adherence to promises; compare ch. 15 : 8. The word for *lie* is of course the opposite of the former, and means *perfidy*, want of fidelity. The particular term here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

Hath more abounded, i. e. 'appeared as more abundant,' 'been seen as such;' or the word may be taken in the sense of excelling, as in Matt. 5 : 20, "unless your righteousness excel the righteousness of the scribes," &c.; 1 Cor. 8 : 8, "neither if we eat are we the better," &c. 'If God's truth is the greater, the more conspicuous, &c. to his glory;' i. e. so that he is glorified. *Why am I yet also judged as a sinner*; i. e. condemned, or punished as such.

(8) *And not* rather (*as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say*) *Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.* The sense of this verse is obvious, though the grammatical construction of the original is irregular. One of the simplest and most common methods of resolving the passage, is to supply the word *say*. 'Why not *say* at once (as some slanderously affirm that we say) Let us do evil that good may come.' A second method is the following: 'Why not let us do evil that good may come, as some slanderously affirm that we teach.' Paul here, most probably, as often elsewhere, changes the construction of the sentence in his progress through it; see Gal. 2: 3—5. He seems to have intended to say, 'Why not let us do evil, &c.;' but having interrupted himself, he makes the latter clause grammatically dependent on the word *say* in the parenthesis, instead of connecting it with the words with which the sentence commences. It, therefore, stands thus, 'And why not (as some slanderously affirm that we say) that we may do evil that good may come.' Our version skilfully avoids the difficulty, and presents the meaning clearly.

Whose condemnation, &c., that is, the condemnation of those who adopt the principle, that it is right to do evil that good may come; not those who slandered the apostle. This verse contains Paul's answer to the principle on which the wicked Jews hoped for exemption from punishment. 'Our unfaithfulness serves to commend the faithfulness of God, therefore we ought not to be punished.' According to this reasoning, Paul answers, 'The worse we are the better. For the more wicked we are, the more conspicuous will be the mercy of God in our pardon; we may, therefore, do evil that good may come.' Paul, frequently, as here, recognises the authority of the instinctive moral feelings of men. He has reduced the reasoning of the Jews to a conclusion shocking to the moral sense, and has thereby refuted it. Having thus demonstrated that the Jews cannot expect exemption on the ground of being the peculiar people of God, except on principles incompatible with the government of the world, and inconsistent with the plainest moral truths, he draws, in the next verse, the conclusion, that the Jew, as to the matter of justification, has no pre-eminence over the Gentile.

DOCTRINES.

1. The advantages of membership, even of the external church, and of a participation of its ordinances, are very numerous and great, vs. 1, 2.

2. The great advantage of the Christian over the heathen world, and of the members of a visible ecclesiastical body over others not so situated, is the greater amount of divine truth presented to their understandings and hearts, v. 2.

3. All the writings which the Jews, at the time of Christ and his apostles, regarded as inspired, are really the word of God, v. 2.

4. No promise or covenant of God can ever be rightfully urged in favour of exemption from the punishment of sin, or of impunity to those

who live in it. God is faithful to his promises, but he never promises to pardon the impenitently guilty, vs. 3, 4.

5. God will make the wrath of men to praise him. Their unrighteousness will commend his righteousness, without, on that account, making its condemnation less certain or less severe, vs. 5, 6.

6. Any doctrine inconsistent with the first principles of morals must be false, no matter how plausible the metaphysical argument in its favour. And that mode of reasoning is correct, which refutes such doctrines by showing their inconsistency with moral truth, v. 8.

REMARKS.

1. We should feel the peculiar responsibilities which rest upon us as the inhabitants of a Christian country, as the members of the Christian church, and possessors of the word of God; as such, we enjoy advantages for which we shall have to render a strict account, vs. 1, 2.

2. It is a mark of genuine piety, to be disposed always to justify God and to condemn ourselves. On the other hand, a disposition to self-justification and the extenuation of our sins, however secret, is an indication of a want of a proper sense of our own unworthiness and of the divine excellence, vs. 4, 5.

3. Beware of any refuge from the fear of future punishment, founded upon the hope that God will clear the guilty, or that he will not judge the world and take vengeance for our sins, vs. 6, 7.

4. There is no better evidence against the truth of any doctrine, than that its tendency is immoral. And there is no greater proof that a man is wicked, that his condemnation is just, than that he does evil that good may come. There is commonly, in such cases, not only the evil of the act committed, but that of hypocrisy and duplicity also, v. 8.

5. Speculative and moral truths, which are believed on their own evidence as soon as they are presented to the mind, should be regarded as authoritative and as fixed points in all reasonings. When men deny such first principles, or attempt to push beyond them to a deeper foundation of truth, there is no end to the obscurity, uncertainty, and absurdity of their speculations. What God forces us from the very constitution of our nature to believe, as, for example, the existence of the external world, our own personal identity, the difference between good and evil, &c., it is at once a violation of his will and of the dictates of reason to deny or to question. Paul assumed, as an ultimate fact, that it is wrong to do evil that good may come, v. 8.

CHAP. 3: 9—20.

[9]What then? are we better *than they?* No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; [10]as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: [11]there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. [12]They are all

gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. [13]Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: [14]whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: [15]their feet *are* swift to shed blood: [16]destruction and misery *are* in their ways: [17]and the way of peace have they not known: [18]there is no fear of God before their eyes. [19]Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. [20]Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

ANALYSIS.

The apostle, having answered the objections to his argument in proof that the Jews, being sinners in the sight of God, are, as such, exposed to condemnation, draws, in v. 9, the obvious conclusion, that they have, as to the matter of justification, no pre-eminence over the Gentile. He confirms his doctrine of the universal sinfulness of men, by numerous quotations from the Old Testament. These passages are descriptive of their depravity in the general, vs. 10—12; and then of its special manifestations in sins of the tongue, vs. 13, 14, and sins of conduct, vs. 15—18. The conclusion of all this reasoning, from consciousness, experience, and Scripture, is that "all the world is guilty before God," v. 19; and the necessary consequence, "no flesh can be justified by the deeds of the law," v. 20.

COMMENTARY.

(9) *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise.* 'What then,' asks the apostle, 'is the conclusion from all this reasoning as to the moral state and character of the Jews and Gentiles? Are we Jews better off, or more favourably situated than they? By no means.' Our version of the word rendered *are we better*, expresses, perhaps with sufficient accuracy, the meaning of the apostle. The word probably signifies here *do we excel*, and as the connexion shows, do we excel as to the point under discussion, are we more favourably situated as to obtaining the divine favour? That, as to other points, the Jew did excel, or had many advantages, Paul had freely admitted, but as to his justification before God, he and the Gentiles stood on precisely the same level.

The reason why the Jews are declared to be no better off than the Gentiles, as far as justification is concerned, is given in the next clause. *For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.* The word rendered *to prove* signifies *to bring a charge against any one*; and here, *to substantiate an accusation.* Paul had not only accused, but established the truth of the accusation, that the Jews and Gentiles were all *under sin.* This latter phrase may signify *to be under the power of sin*; or *under its guilt*, as the word *sin* often signifies *guilt of sin*,

see 1 Cor. 15: 17. John 15: 22; compare such passages as Gal. 3: 10. Rom. 6: 14. 7: 14, &c. &c. Both ideas are here probably included, Paul had proved that all were *sinners*, that is, corrupt and exposed to condemnation.

Verses 10—18 contain the confirmation of the truth of the universal sinfulness of men, by the testimony of Scripture. These passages are not to be found consecutively in any one place in the Old Testament, but are quoted from several. Verses 10—12 are from Ps. 14 or 53: v. 13, from Ps. 5: 9; v. 14, from Ps. 10: 7; vs. 15—17, from Isa. 59: 7, 8; and v. 18, from Ps. 36: 1. These passages, it will be perceived, are of two classes; the one general, descriptive of the whole human race as wicked; the other special, referring to particular prevalent sinful acts as evidence of the general sinfulness of men, on the principle 'by their fruits ye shall know them.' This method of reasoning is legitimate and common. The national character of any people is proved by a reference to the special acts by which it is manifested. It is not necessary that every inhabitant of France, for example, should manifest his gayety by dancing, to make the argument good from the prevalence of this amusement, that gayety is a national trait of the French character. So it is not necessary to prove that every man manifests his wickedness by shedding blood, to make the prevalence of this and kindred crimes a proof that men are, as a race, corrupt.

(10) *As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one.* This is a general declaration of the universal wickedness of men. The two ideas contained in this proposition are expressed in the following verses. All are destitute of piety, v. 11; and all are consequently immoral, v. 12.

(11) *There is none that understandeth*, i. e. who sees things in their true nature; who has right apprehensions of God. Right views of truth are uniformly, because necessarily attended with right affections towards it. Hence, 'understanding' is in the Scriptures so often used for religion, see the note on ch. 1: 21; and hence, as an amplification of the phrase, 'there is none that understandeth,' Paul adds, *there is none that seeketh after God*, which expresses all those exercises of desire and worship, consequent on the discovery of the divine excellence.

(12) *They are all gone out of the way.* Blinded by sin to the perfections and loveliness of God and truth, they have turned from the way which he has prescribed, and which leads to himself, and have made choice of another way and of another portion. *They are together become unprofitable*, i. e. useless, worthless, corrupt. The last is the literal meaning of the Hebrew word used in the passage quoted, Ps. 14: 3. *There is none that doeth good, no, not one.* Universal corruption of morals is the consequence of universal apostasy from God, see ch. 1: 24, 26, 28.

(13, 14) These verses present that evidence of the sinfulness of men which consists in the universal prevalence, under some form or other, of evil speaking. *Their throat is an open sepulchre*, i. e. from their throat

issue words as offensive and pestiferous as the tainted breath of an open grave; or, what from the next clause may appear probable, 'their throat is always open, and ready to devour like the insatiable and insidious grave.' They injure by deceit and slander, which is the poison of asps. *Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness*, i. e. of bitter execration, expressive of malignity towards men, and impiety towards God.

(15—17) Contain the arguments for the apostle's doctrine, derived from the prevalence of sins of violence. *Their feet are swift to shed blood;* they frequently, and without compunction, commit murder and violence. *Destruction and misery are in their ways*, i. e. mark their path. *The way of peace they have not known.* 'The way of peace' means the way which leads to peace or happiness. Here the happiness of others is principally intended. 'They do not pursue that course which is productive of happiness.' This clause, therefore, includes all the manifestations of an evil heart, which are seen in the numberless ways in which men injure their fellow-creatures.

(18) Is again a general declaration of unrestrained wickedness. *There is no fear of God before their eyes.* They are not actuated by any regard to the will or displeasure of God. Religious considerations have no force in the government of their conduct.

(19) *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law.* The Hebrew word usually translated *law* means *instruction*, and is used for any intimation of the will of God designed for the direction of men; see Isa. 1: 10. 8: 16. Prov. 1: 8, &c. &c. It depends on the context whether reference be had to the general rule of duty which he has prescribed, or to some one of its parts more or less extended. In like manner the apostle uses the corresponding Greek word almost uniformly in the sense of the rule of duty; whether written in the heart, contained in the whole of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, or in some of its parts. It is generally easy, from the context, to determine what law, or rather what part of the law, or rule of duty, he has in each case specially in view. Here it is obvious that *the law* means the Scriptures which contain the will of God revealed for our obedience. These passages quoted above are taken not from the Pentateuch, or law, in its more restricted sense, but from the Psalms and prophets; see John 10: 34. 1 Cor. 14: 21, &c. *Those who are under the law*, see 2: 12. 1 Cor. 9: 20. 'What the Scriptures say concerning the character of men, they must be understood as saying of those to whom they are specially directed.' The Jews cannot pretend that the passages quoted above have reference to the Gentiles; being found in their own law, and addressed to them, they must be considered as indicating the light in which their character and conduct were viewed by God.

That every mouth may be stopped, i. e. that men may be deprived of all excuse, completely reduced to silence. *And the whole world become guilty before God.* The word rendered *guilty* is applied to one who has lost his cause, or who has been convicted, or found guilty. The result,

therefore, at which the apostle has arrived, the conclusion of his argument, from consciousness, experience, and Scripture, is that the whole world is guilty *before God*, i. e. in his judgment or estimation. *The whole world* must, in this connexion, include both Jews and Gentiles, because the preceding argument had related to both classes, and in what follows reference is also had to both.

(20) *Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight*, &c. The apostle, having proved that all men are sinners, draws in this verse the conclusion that no man can be justified by the deeds of the law. *To justify* is obviously a forensic term, and signifies to pronounce, regard, and treat as just or righteous. The declaration of the apostle is, that no man can be pronounced and treated as righteous on the ground of his own obedience to the law. The expression contained in this verse is borrowed from Ps. 143: 2. "Enter not into judgment with thy servant (bring him not to trial); for in thy sight (before thee as judge) shall no man living be justified." This passage also serves to illustrate the nature of justification. The word signifying *to be righteous* does not so properly express the moral character of those to whom it is applied as their relation to the law. It therefore often means *to be in the right*, to have the law on one's side, to be what the law requires; see Gen. 38: 26, "She is more in the right than I;" Job 9: 15, "Though I were in the right I would not answer." Hence to justify is to pronounce one to be in the right, to be such as the law requires, and entitled to be treated accordingly; see Job 33: 32, "Speak, for I desire to justify thee," i. e. to pronounce thee to be what the law demands; Isa. 5: 23, "Which justify the wicked for reward," &c. What Paul, therefore, affirms in this verse is, that no man can, in the sight of God, be regarded as righteous, and entitled to be treated as such, on the ground of his obedience to the law.

Deeds of the law are, of course, such deeds as the law prescribes. The law of which Paul here speaks is the will of God revealed for man's obedience, the universal rule of duty, see v. 19. That it is not to be restricted to the Mosaic law, as though ceremonial works alone were intended, is evident, 1. Because Paul is here speaking of "the whole world," of "all flesh," of Gentiles as well as Jews. The former had nothing to do with the Mosaic law. Why should Paul affirm that they could not be justified by a law which was never obligatory upon them? 2. He had just used the word *law*, not in reference to the Mosaic institutions, but to the Scriptures of the Old Testament which contained the whole revealed will of God. The works of which he speaks are works prescribed by this law, and comprehend, of course, all moral duties. 3. The Jews never made the distinction between the moral and ceremonial law, which the opposite interpretation supposes. To them obedience to the Mosaic ritual was as much a moral duty as any thing else could be. They certainly, therefore, would understand the apostle as meaning, by the phrase "works of the law," works of obedience to

God generally; consequently this must be his meaning. 4. There is in fact no ground for the distinction in reference to this case; because obedience to the divine command is always a moral act, whether that command be a *positive* one, or have its foundation in the reason and nature of things. 5. The whole context, and drift, and object of the epistle require this interpretation. The works of the Jews and Gentiles of which he had been speaking were moral works; the law which they had broken was the moral law; it is that law which he proves can neither justify nor sanctify, which produces conviction of sin, which says, 'Thou shalt not covet,' which is 'holy, just, and good,' and which is exceeding broad. 6. The objections to Paul's doctrine all suppose the moral law to be here intended. In the sixth chapter the objection, which the apostle answers, is not that the neglect of the law of Moses must lead to licentiousness, but that if good works are not necessary to salvation, as the ground of our acceptance, men will live in sin. 7. What is here said of works of the law, is elsewhere said of works generally; 2 Tim. 1: 9, "Who hath saved us not according to (or on account of) our works;" Tit. 3: 5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he hath saved us;" Eph. 2: 9, "We are saved by faith, not by works;" see Rom. 4: 2, &c. &c. This point has been dwelt on at greater length, because it is one of the hinges to the exposition of the epistle, and of the whole plan of the gospel.

Most of the arguments here mentioned are valid against the doctrine of many of the Catholic divines, that Paul has reference to works done before regeneration merely, and not to those which flow from a renewed heart. It is not Paul's doctrine that we are justified not by legal works, but by good works, for "the works of the law" include good works of every kind, works of righteousness, i. e. of the highest kind of excellence. Besides, this view of the subject is entirely inconsistent with the doctrine which the apostle is labouring to establish, viz. that the ground of the sinner's acceptance is not in himself; it is nothing subjective, no state of mind, no works of morality or form, nothing produced in him or done by him, but something done for him, which he must accept, and on which he must rely.

For by the law is the knowledge of sin. As the law was not designed or adapted for the justification of sinners, Paul briefly stated its real object and use. The law produces the recognition of sin in its true nature and consequences. It leads to the conviction of its exceeding turpitude, and desert of punishment. When the law has produced this result, it has prepared us for the reception of the gospel.

DOCTRINES.

1. However men may differ among themselves as to individual character, as to outward circumstances, religious or social, when they appear at the bar of God, all stand on the same level. All are sinners, and, being sinners, are exposed to condemnation, v. 9.

2. The general declarations of the Scriptures descriptive of the character of men, before the advent of Christ, are applicable to men in all ages of the world, because they describe human nature. They declare what fallen man is. As we recognise the descriptions of the human heart, given by profane writers a thousand years ago, as suited to its present character, so the inspired description suits us, as well as those for whom it was originally intended, vs. 10—18.

3. Piety and morality cannot be separated. If men do not understand, if they have no fear of God before their eyes, they become altogether unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, vs. 10—12.

4. The office of the law is neither to justify nor to sanctify. It convinces and condemns. All efforts to secure the favour of God, therefore, by legal obedience, must be vain, v. 20.

REMARKS.

1. As God regards the moral character in men, and as we are all sinners, no one has any reason to exalt himself over another. With our hands upon our mouth, and our mouth in the dust, we must all appear as guilty before God, v. 9.

2. The Scriptures are the message of God to all to whom they come. They speak general truths which are intended to apply to all to whom they are applicable. What they say of sinners, as such, they say of all sinners: what they promise to believers, they promise to all believers. They should, therefore, ever be read with a spirit of self-application, vs. 10—18.

3. To be prepared for the reception of the gospel, we must be convinced of sin, humbled under a sense of its turpitude, silenced under a conviction of its condemning power, and prostrated at the footstool of mercy, under a feeling that we cannot satisfy the demands of the law, that if ever saved, it must be by other merit and other power than our own, v. 20.

CHAP. 3: 21—31.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being
witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 even the righteousness of God
which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe:
for there is no difference: 23 for all have sinned, and come short of the glory
of God; 24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is
in Christ Jesus: 25 whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through
faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins
that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 to declare, *I say*, at this
time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him
which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded.
By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore
we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the
law. 29 *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles?

Yes, of the Gentiles also. [30]Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. [31]Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

ANALYSIS.

Having proved that justification, on the ground of legal obedience or personal merit, is for all men impossible, Paul proceeds to unfold the method of salvation presented in the gospel. With regard to this method, he here teaches, 1. Its nature. 2. The ground on which the offer of justification is made. 3. Its object. 4. Its results.

I. As to its nature, he teaches, 1. That the righteousness which it proposes is not attainable by works, but by faith, vs. 21, 22. 2. That it is adapted to all men, Jews as well as Gentiles, since there is no difference as to their moral state, vs. 22, 23. 3. It is entirely gratuitous, v. 24.

II. As to its ground, it is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, or Jesus Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, vs. 24, 25.

III. Its object is the display of the divine perfections, and the reconciliation of the justice of God, with the exhibition of mercy to the sinner, v. 26.

IV. Its results. 1. It humbles man by excluding all ground of boasting, vs. 27, 28. 2. It presents God in his true character as the God and father of all men, of the Gentile no less than the Jew, vs. 29, 30. 3. It confirms the law, v. 31.

COMMENTARY.

(21) *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested*, &c. Having demonstrated that no flesh could be justified by the deeds of the law in the sight of God, the apostle proceeds to show how the sinner can be justified. With regard to this point, he teaches, in this verse, 1. That the righteousness which is acceptable to God is not a legal righteousness; and 2. That it had been taught already in the Old Testament. The words *but now* may be regarded as merely marking the transition from one paragraph to another, or as a designation of time: *now*, i. e. under the gospel dispensation. In favour of this view is the phrase, "to declare, *at this time*, his righteousness," in v. 26; compare also 1 : 17. *Is manifested*, i. e. clearly made known, equivalent to the phrase *is revealed*, as used in 1 : 17. The words *righteousness of God* are subjected here to the same diversity of interpretation that was noticed in the passage just cited, where they first occur. They may mean, 1. A divine attribute, the justice, mercy, or general rectitude of God. 2. That righteousness which is acceptable to God, which is such in his estimation. 3. God's method of justification; see note on 1 : 17. The last interpretation gives here a very good sense, and is one very commonly adopted. The method of justification by works being impossible, God has revealed

another, already taught indeed both in the law and prophets, a method which is not legal (without law), i. e. not on the condition of obedience to the law, but on the condition of faith, which is applicable to all men, and perfectly gratuitous,' vs. 21—24. But for the reasons given on ch. 1: 17, the second interpretation is to be preferred. The term *righteousness* is employed to designate all that excellence which is demanded by the law, and which entitles to all the blessings of a state of justification, and frequently includes the idea of this blessedness itself, i. e. the blessedness of the state of complete favour with God; see above on v. 20. The phrase *righteousness of God* then means that righteousness, with its consequent blessings, of which God is the author, which is of avail before God, which meets and secures his approbation. This interpretation is perfectly consistent with the context. 'As men cannot attain to righteousness by the deeds of the law, God has revealed in the gospel another righteousness, which is not legal, but which is to be attained by faith, which is offered to all men, Gentiles as well as Jews, and which is entirely gratuitous.'

The words *without the law* are to be connected with the phrase *righteousness of God.* It is the righteousness of God without the law, i. e. the works of the law; see the full phrase, v. 28; compare Gal. 2: 16. It is a righteousness not attainable by obedience to the law. *Being testified by the law and the prophets. Testified*, i. e. taught, because the teaching of inspired men was in the form of testimony; it was not the communication of what they themselves had discovered, but a declaration of what had been delivered to them by God. The Jews were accustomed to divide the Scriptures into two parts, *the law and the prophets;* what did not belong to the former was included under the latter. Hence the phrase, as here used, is equivalent to *the Scriptures;* see Matt. 5: 17. 7: 12. Luke 16: 31. Acts 13: 15, &c. &c. That the Jewish scriptures did teach the doctrine of gratuitous justification, Paul proves in the next chapter, from the case of Abraham and the testimony of David.

(22) *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ*, &c. In the preceding verse, Paul had taught negatively, that this righteousness, which is acceptable and available in the sight of God, was not to be attained by the works of the law, he here teaches, 1. That it is to be attained by faith in Christ. 2. That it is applicable to all men, Gentiles as well as Jews. Which is *by faith of Jesus Christ*, i. e. through, or by means of that faith of which Christ is the object. We are not justified on account of our faith, as though faith were the ground of our acceptance, for the ground is mentioned afterwards; but it is through faith. Such is almost uniformly the force of the Greek preposition here used, when connected with the genitive. *Faith of Christ* is of course equivalent to *faith in Christ;* see Mark 11: 22, "Have faith in God," literally 'of God;' Acts 3: 16, "Through faith in his name," literally 'of his name;' Gal. 2: 20, "I live by faith of the Son of God," &c. &c.

Unto all and upon all that believe. The prepositions rendered *unto*

and *upon* do not here express different ideas, any more than those rendered *by* and *through*, in v. 30. The repetition expresses intensity. 'This righteousness is revealed or comes unto all, even all, absolutely all, without distinction of name or nation.' The only limitation is the exercise of faith. It is unto all believers. We have here the second attribute of the righteousness revealed in the gospel, mentioned in this verse, viz. its universal applicability. It is not to be restricted to any one class of men, but is as well suited to the Gentile as the Jew, to the bond as the free, to the wise as the unwise, to the poor as the rich. The reason why this righteousness is thus suited to all men is, that *there is no difference* in their moral state or relation to God.

(23) *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* These clauses express very nearly associated ideas. The former presents more prominently the moral character of men; the latter its consequences. They are sinners, and have, therefore, forfeited the divine favour. Here again the fact that men are sinners is given as a conclusive reason why justification can only be by faith. The word rendered *glory* has been very variously explained. It may signify *approbation*, as in John 12: 43, "they love the approbation of men better than the approbation of God;" so Grotius. Or it may be taken for the reward which God bestows, so often called in Scripture *glory*; see ch. 2: 7. As the word rendered *come short* is often used in reference to those who lose a race, the clause may be explained as an allusion to that game. The glory of God is the goal or the prize for which men contend, and which all have failed to win.

(24) *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* The apostle continues his exhibition of the method of salvation by using the participle 'being justified,' instead of the verb 'we are justified,' agreeably to a mode of construction not unusual in Greek, though much more frequent in the Hebrew. He says we are justified *freely by his grace*, that is, in a manner which is entirely gratuitous. We have not the slightest degree of merit to offer as the ground of our acceptance. This is the third characteristic of the method of justification which is by the righteousness of God. Though it is so entirely gratuitous as regards the sinner, yet it is in a way perfectly consistent with the justice of God. It is founded on "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," that is, of which he is the author.

The word translated *redemption* has two senses in the New Testament. 1. It means properly 'a deliverance effected by the payment of a ransom.' This is its primary etymological meaning. 2. It means deliverance simply, without any reference to the means of its accomplishment, whether by power or wisdom. Luke 21: 28, "the day of redemption (i. e. of deliverance) draweth nigh;" Heb. 11: 35, and perhaps Rom. 8: 23; compare Isa. 50: 2, "is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?" &c. &c. When applied to the work of Christ, as effecting our deliverance from the punishment of sin, it is always taken in its proper sense, *deliverance effected by the payment of a ransom.* This is evi-

dent from the fact that Christ is uniformly presented as a Redeemer, not in the character of a teacher, but of a priest, a sacrifice, propitiation, &c. Comp. Eph. 1 : 7. Heb. 9 : 15. Col. 1 : 14. 1 Tim. 2 : 6. Matt. 20 : 28.

That is in Christ Jesus, i. e. which is *by* him, as the preposition here rendered *in* means in places almost without number; Acts 13 : 39, "by him all that believe are justified," &c. Acts 17 : 31, "by that man whom he hath ordained," &c. &c.

(25) *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*, &c. This clause contains the ground of our deliverance from the curse of the law, and of our acceptance with God, and constitutes therefore the second step in the apostle's exhibition of the plan of salvation. He had already taught that justification was not by works, but by faith, and entirely gratuitous; he now comes to show how it is that this exercise of mercy to the sinner can be reconciled with the justice of God, and the demands of his law.

The two most commonly received interpretations of the word rendered *propitiation* are the following. 1. It may mean the propitiatory or mercy-seat. It is used in this sense repeatedly in the Septuagint, and also in the New Testament. See Exod. 25 : 17, 18, 21. Heb. 9 : 5, &c. But this meaning of the word is here unsuitable, because Christ is not elsewhere called the mercy-seat, and because it violates the propriety of the apostle's language, inasmuch as he immediately speaks of the blood of this *hilastarion*. 2. According to the second interpretation the term here signifies a *propitiatory sacrifice*, or *propitiation*. It is properly an adjective, and is applied to any thing designed to render God propitious. Hence the frequent phrases 'propitiatory sacrifice,' 'propitiatory monument,' 'propitiatory death.' In this case the word for *sacrifice* may be understood, or the Greek term occurring in the text may be taken substantively. This interpretation is to be preferred to the other, as more consistent with the context, more consonant to the scriptural representations in reference to this subject, and perfectly consistent with usage.

Through faith in his blood. These words may be connected either with the immediately preceding or with those at the beginning of v. 24. According to the former method, the sense is, 'Christ is a propitiation through faith in his blood,' that is, which is available to those only who exercise this faith, and on this condition. According to the latter, 'We are justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (we are justified) through faith in his blood.' So that this clause is co-ordinate with the last member of v. 24, and explanatory of it. The first method appears the more simple and natural of the two.

To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. Having stated the nature and ground of the gospel method of justification, he comes, in this clause, to state it objects. 'God has set forth Christ, as a propitiatory sacrifice, to declare his righteousness.' It should be remembered that the object of the death of Christ, being very comprehensive, is very variously pre

sented in the word of God. In other words, the death of Christ answers a great number of infinitely important ends in the government of God. It displays "his manifold wisdom," Eph. 3: 10, 11; it was designed "to purify unto himself a people zealous of good works," Tit. 2: 14; to break down the distinction between the Jews and Gentiles, Eph. 2: 15; to effect the reconciliation of both Jews and Gentiles unto God, Eph. 2: 16; "to deliver us from this present evil world," Gal. 1: 4; to secure the forgiveness of sins, Eph. 1: 7: to vindicate his ways to men in so long passing by or remitting their sins, Rom. 3: 25; to reconcile the exercise of mercy with the requirements of justice, v. 26, &c. &c. These ends are not inconsistent, but perfectly harmonious. The end here specially mentioned is *to declare his righteousness.* These words here, as elsewhere, are variously explained. 1. They are understood of some one of the moral attributes of God, as his veracity, by Locke; or his mercy, by Grotius, Koppe, and many of the moderns. Both of these interpretations are forced, because they assign very unusual meanings to the word righteousness, and meanings little suited to the context. 2. Most commentators who render the phrase 'righteousness, or justification of God,' in ch. 1: 17. 3: 21, God's method of justification, adopt that sense here. The meaning would then be that 'God had set forth Christ as a propitiation, to exhibit his method of justifying sinners, both in reference to the sins committed under the former dispensation, and under the new.' 3. The great majority of commentators give it the sense of the general rectitude of God. This is recommended by the consideration that this is the common meaning of the word righteousness, that the phrase here used must be so understood in ch. 2: 5, where 'the unrighteousness of men is said to commend the righteousness of God,' and especially that, in the next verse, Paul subjoins the explanatory clause, "that he might be just, and the justifier of every one which believeth in Jesus." This, as Calvin remarks, is Paul's own definition of "the righteousness of God," of which he is here speaking. The meaning of the clause then is, that 'God hath set forth Christ, as a propitiation, to make it plain that he is just, or righteous in the forgiveness of sins.' His pardoning mercy is thus vindicated from all appearance of interfering with the demands of justice.

For the remission of sins. The preposition which is here rendered *for* may be variously explained. 1. It not unfrequently with the accusative, the case by which it is here followed, has the force which more properly belongs to it with the genitive, i. e. *through.* This would suit the context, if righteousness meant mercy, 'To exhibit his mercy by means of the remission of sins.' But this explanation of the word 'righteousness' has been shown above to be objectionable. 2. It is taken to mean *as to, as it regards.* This also gives a good sense, 'To declare his righteousness, *as to*, or *as it regards* the remission of sins.' But the preposition in question very rarely, if ever, has this force. 3. The common force of the preposition is retained, *on account of.* This clause would then assign

the ground or reason of the exhibition of the righteousness of God. It became necessary that there should be this exhibition, because God had overlooked and pardoned sin from the beginning. This is the most natural and satisfactory interpretation of the passage. The word rendered *remission* more strictly means *pretermission*, *a passing by*, or *overlooking*. Paul repeatedly uses the proper term for *remission*, as in Eph. 1: 7. Heb. 9: 22, &c., but the word here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Many, therefore, consider the selection of this particular term as designed to express the idea that sins committed before the advent of Christ might more properly be said to be overlooked, than actually pardoned, until the sacrifice of the Redeemer had been completed. Reference is made to Acts 17: 30, where God is said to have overlooked the times of ignorance. But as the word used by the apostle is actually used to express the idea of *remission* in Greek writers, the majority of commentators adopt that meaning here.

The words *that are past* seem distinctly to refer to the times before the advent of Christ. This is plain from their opposition to the expression, *at this time*, in the next verse, and from a comparision with the parallel passage in Heb. 9: 15, "He is the Mediator for the redemption of sins *that were* under the first testament." The words rendered *through the forbearance of God* may be variously connected and explained. 1. They may be connected with the words just mentioned, and the meaning be, 'Sins that are past, or, which were committed during the forbearance of God;' see Acts 17: 30, where the times before the advent are described in much the same manner. 2. Or they may be taken, as by our translators, as giving the cause of the remission of these sins, 'They were remitted, or overlooked through the divine forbearance or mercy.' The former interpretation is better suited to the context. The meaning of the whole verse, therefore, is, 'God has set forth Jesus Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, to vindicate his righteousness or justice, on account of the remission of the sins committed under the former dispensation,' and not under the former dispensation only, but which are committed at the present time, as the apostle immediately adds.

(26) *To declare*, I say, *at this time*, *his righteousness*, &c. This verse is an amplification and explanation of the preceding. The words there and here rendered *to declare*, properly mean *for the manifestation*. This clause is evidently co-ordinate with the second member of the preceding verse. 'Christ was set forth as a sacrifice for the exhibition of the righteousness of God, on account of the remission of the sins of old; for the exhibition of his righteousness at this time,' &c. There are two purposes to be answered by this sacrifice, the vindication of the character of God in passing by former sins, and in passing by them now. *At this time*, therefore, as opposed to the time 'of forbearance,' is the gospel dispensation.

That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. This clause is, as before remarked, the explanation and definition of the

righteousness of God just spoken of. It depends, in sense, upon the first clause of the 25th verse, 'Whom God hath set forth as a propitiatory sacrifice, in order that he might be just in the justification of those that believe.' It is obvious, therefore, that this clause expresses more definitely the idea intended to be conveyed by the phrase "to declare his righteousness." Christ was set forth as a sacrifice for the manifestation of the righteousness or justice of God, that is, that he might be just, although the justifier of the ungodly. The word *just* expresses the idea of uprightness generally, of being or doing what the nature of the case demands. But when spoken of the conduct of a judge, and in reference to his treatment of sin, it must mean more specifically that modification of general rectitude, which requires that sin should be treated according to its true nature, that the demands of law or justice should not be disregarded. What the apostle means to say, is, that there is no such disregard to the claims of justice in the justification of the sinner who believes in Christ. This is seen and acknowledged, when it is known that he is justified neither on account of his own acts or character, nor by a mere sovereign dispensing with the demands of the law, but on the ground of a complete satisfaction rendered by his substitute, i. e. on the ground of the obedience and death of Christ. The gratuitous nature of this justification is not at all affected by its proceeding on the ground of this perfect satisfaction. It is, to the sinner, still the most undeserved of all favours, to which he not only has not the shadow of a personal claim, but the very reverse of which he has most richly merited. It is thus that justice and mercy are harmoniously united in the sinner's justification. Justice is no less justice, although mercy has her perfect work; and mercy is no less mercy, although justice is completely satisfied.

"Just *and* the justifier," &c. that is, just *although* the justifier, &c. This force of the particle rendered *and* is very common both in the Old and New Testament.

Him which believeth in Jesus; literally him that is of the faith of Jesus; compare Gal. 2: 7, 12. The expression *faith of Jesus* means faith of which Jesus is the object. God therefore is just in justifying the man who relies on Jesus as a propitiatory sacrifice.

(27) *Where* is *boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith.* In this and the following verses, the apostle presents the tendency and results of the glorious plan of salvation, which he had just unfolded. It excludes boasting, v. 27. It presents God in his true character, as the God and Father of the Gentiles as well as the Jews, vs. 29, 30; and it establishes the law, v. 31. The word rendered *boasting* is used to express the idea of self-gratulation with or without sufficient reason. In the former case, it is properly rendered *rejoicing*, as when Paul speaks of the Thessalonians being his "crown of rejoicing." In the latter, the word *boasting* best answers to its meaning. The word sometimes means the act of *boasting* or *rejoicing;* at others, by metonymy, the ground or reason of boasting, as in

Rom. 15: 17. Either sense suits this passage. It may mean all boasting is prevented, or all ground of boasting is excluded. Paul means to say that the result of the gospel plan of salvation is to prevent all self-approbation, self-gratulation, and exaltation on the part of the sinner. He is presented as despoiled of all merit, and as deserving the displeasure of God. He can attribute, in no degree, his deliverance from this displeasure to himself, and he cannot exalt himself either in the presence of God, or in comparison with his fellow-sinners. As sin is odious in the sight of God, it is essential, in any scheme of mercy, that the sinner should be made to feel this, and that nothing done by or for him in any measure diminishes his personal ill-desert on account of his transgressions.

The expressions "by what law?" "the law of works," and "law of faith," especially the last, are peculiar, as the word *law* is not used in its ordinary sense. The general idea of a *rule of action*, however, is retained. 'By what rule? By that which requires works? Nay; by that which requires faith;' compare ch. 9: 31.

(28) *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.* The word rendered *we conclude* means, more properly, *we are persuaded;* see 8: 18. 2 Cor. 10: 7. This verse may be considered as immediately connected with the preceding, and as stating a persuasion, founded, among other reasons, on the truth there presented. The idea would then be, 'We are persuaded that the doctrine of justification is true, because it thus effectually excludes all boasting.' Or it may express the conclusion from the whole of the preceding exhibition; which is probably the correct view of its connexion. The great truth of which Paul declares his firm conviction, therefore, is, that a man is justified by means of faith, and not on account of obedience to the law.

(29, 30) Is he *the God of the Jews only?* is he *not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also; seeing it is one God who shall justify*, &c. We have here the second result of the gospel method of justification; it presents God as equally the God of the Gentiles and the Jews. He is such, because 'it is one God who justifies the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.' He deals with both classes on precisely the same principles; he pursues, with regard to both, the same plan, and offers salvation to both on exactly the same terms. There is, therefore, in this doctrine, the foundation laid for a universal religion, which may be preached to every creature under heaven; which need not, as was the case with the Jewish system, be confined to any one sect or nation. This is the only doctrine which suits the character of God, and his relation to all his intelligent creatures upon earth. God is a universal, and not a national God; and this is a method of salvation universally applicable. These sublime truths are so familiar to our minds that they have, in a measure, lost their power; but as to the Jew, enthralled all his life in his narrow national and religious prejudices, they must have expanded his whole soul with unwonted emotions of wonder, gratitude,

and joy. We Gentiles may now look up to heaven, and confidently say "Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and though Israel acknowledge us not."

The expressions '*by* faith,' and '*through* faith,' evidently do not differ in their meaning, as Paul uses them indiscriminately, sometimes the one, as in 1 : 17. 3 : 20. 4 : 16, &c. &c., and sometimes the other, as in 3 : 22, 25. Gal. 2 : 16, &c. &c., and as each of the prepositions employed in the original is used to express the means by which any thing is done.

(31) *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.* This verse states the third result of this method of salvation; instead of invalidating, it establishes the law. As Paul uses the word *law* in so many senses, it is doubtful which one of them is here principally intended. In every sense, however, the declaration is true. If the law means the Old Testament generally, then it is true, for the gospel method of justification contradicts no one of its statements, is inconsistent with no one of its doctrines, and invalidates no one of its promises, but is harmonious with all, and confirmatory of the whole. If it means the Mosaic institutions specially, these were shadows of which Christ is the substance. That law is abolished, not by being pronounced spurious or invalid, but by having met its accomplishment, and answered its design in the gospel. What it taught and promised, the gospel also teaches and promises, only in clearer and fuller measure. If it means the moral law, which no doubt was prominently intended, still it is not invalidated, but established. No moral obligation is weakened, no penal sanction disregarded. The precepts are enforced by new and stronger motives, and the penalty is answered in him, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree. To whom be glory now and for ever.

DOCTRINES.

1. The evangelical doctrine of justification by faith is the doctrine of the Old no less than of the New Testament, v. 21.

2. Justification is pronouncing one to be just, and treating him accordingly, on the ground that the demands of the law have been satisfied concerning him, vs. 24, 25, 26.

3. The ground of justification is not our own merit, nor faith, nor evangelical obedience; not the work of Christ in us, but his work for us, i. e. his obedience unto death, v. 25.

4. An act may be perfectly gratuitous as it regards its object, and at the same time proceed on the ground of a complete satisfaction to the demands of the law. Thus justification is gratuitous, not because those demands are unsatisfied, but because it is granted to those who have no personal ground of recommendation, vs. 24, 26.

5. God is the ultimate end of all his own acts. To declare his glory is the highest and best end which he can propose for himself or his creatures, v. 25.

6. The atonement does not consist in a display to others of the divine

justice; this is one of its designs and results, but it is such a display only by being a satisfaction to the justice of God. It is not a symbol or illustration, but a satisfaction, v. 26.

7. All true doctrine tends to humble men and to exalt God; and all true religion is characterized by humility and reverence, v. 27.

8. God is a universal Father, and all men are brethren, vs. 29, 30.

9. The law of God is immutable. Its precepts are always binding, and its penalty must be inflicted either on the sinner or his substitute. When, however, it is said that the penalty of the law is inflicted on the Redeemer, as the sinner's substitute, or in the language of Scripture, that "he was made a curse for us," it cannot be imagined that he suffered the same kind of evils (as remorse, &c.) which the sinner would have suffered. The law threatens no specific kind of evil as its penalty. The term death in Scripture designates any or all the evils inflicted in punishment of sin. And the penalty, or curse of the law (in the language of the Bible), is any evil judicially inflicted in satisfaction of the demands of justice. To say that Christ suffered, therefore, to satisfy the law; to declare the righteousness of God, or that he might be just in justifying him that believes in Jesus; that he bore the penalty of the law, are all equivalent expressions, v. 31.

REMARKS.

1. As the cardinal doctrine of the Bible is justification by faith, so the turning point in the soul's history, the saving act, is the reception of Jesus Christ as the propitiation for our sins, v. 25.

2. All modes of preaching must be erroneous which do not lead sinners to feel that the great thing to be done, and done first, is to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and to turn unto God through him. And all religious experience must be defective which does not embrace distinctly a sense of the justice of our condemnation, and a conviction of the sufficiency of the work of Christ, and an exclusive reliance upon it as such, v. 25.

3. As God proposes his own glory as the end of all that he does, so ought we to have that glory as the constant and commanding object of pursuit, v. 25.

4. The doctrine of atonement produces in us its proper effect when it leads us to see and feel that God is just; that he is infinitely gracious; that we are deprived of all ground of boasting; that the way of salvation, which is open for us, is open for all men; and that the motives to all duty, instead of being weakened, are enforced and multiplied, vs. 25—31.

5. In the gospel all is harmonious; justice and mercy, as it regards God; freedom from the law, and the strongest obligations to obedience, as it regards men, v. 25, 31.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTENTS.

The object of this chapter is to confirm the doctrine of justification by faith. It is divided into two parts. The first, from v. 1 to 17 inclusive, contains the argumentative portion. The second, v. 18 to 25, is an illustration of the faith of Abraham.

CHAP. 4: 1—17.

[1]What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? [2]For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. [3]For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. [4]Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. [5]But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. [6]Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, [7]*saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. [8]Blessed *is* man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. [9]*Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the circumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. [10]How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. [11]And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had*, *yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: [12]and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had*, being *yet* uncircumcised. [13]For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. [14]For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: [15]because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression. [16]Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, [17](as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

ANALYSIS.

Paul, from the 21st verse of the preceding chapter, had been setting forth the gospel method of salvation. That this is the true method he

now proves, 1. From the fact that Abraham was justified by faith, vs. 1—5. That this was really the case he shows, first, because otherwise Abraham would have had ground of boasting, even in the sight of God, v. 2; second, because the Scriptures expressly declare that he was justified by faith, v. 3.

Verses 4, 5, are designed to show, that being justified by faith is tantamount with being justified gratuitously, and, therefore, all those passages which speak of the gratuitous forgiveness of sins may be fairly cited in favour of the doctrine of justification by faith.

2. On this principle he adduces Ps. 32: 1, 2, as his second argument, for there David speaks, not of rewarding the righteous as such, or for their righteousness, but of the free acceptance of the unworthy, vs. 6—8.

3. The third argument is designed to show that circumcision is not a necessary condition of justification, from the fact that Abraham was justified before he was circumcised; and, therefore, is the head and father of all believers, whether circumcised or not, vs. 9—12.

4. The fourth argument is from the nature of the covenant made with Abraham, in which the promise was made on the condition of faith, and not of legal obedience, vs. 13, 14.

5. And the fifth, from the nature of the law, vs. 15—17.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?* The connexion of this verse with the preceding train of reasoning is obvious. Paul had taught that we are justified by faith; as well in confirmation of this doctrine, as to anticipate an objection from the Jew, he refers to the case of Abraham. 'How was it then with Abraham? How did he obtain justification?'

The words rendered *as pertaining to the flesh* may be more properly rendered *as to*, or *through the flesh*. And instead of being connected with the word *father*, they should stand at the end of the verse, 'what hath Abraham our father found through the flesh?' Such is their position in the original; and although the sense is good, which is afforded by connecting them as in our version, yet the Greek will hardly admit of it.

The word *flesh* in this connexion is variously explained. It is rendered by some *naturally, by himself;* and to the same amount by Grotius, *by his own powers*. This, however, is, confessedly, a very unusual signification of the term. Others again suppose that the reference is to circumcision; 'through the flesh' is then equivalent to 'circumcision which is in the flesh.' But there is no ground for this specific reference in the context. Paul often uses the word *flesh* in a general way for every thing external, relating to ceremonies, legal observances, &c.; see Gal. 6: 12, "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh;" Gal. 3: 3, "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh;" Phil. 3: 3, 4, where

Paul says he 'has no confidence in the flesh,' and adds, "If any other man thinketh he hath whereof to glory in the flesh, I more." He then enumerates his Hebrew descent, his being a Pharisee, his blameless legal righteousness, as all included in this comprehensive expression. By the term, in this instance, is to be understood all the advantages of Abraham, and all his works, as the context shows. The point of the apostle's question is, 'Has Abraham obtained justification or the favour of God by the flesh?' To this a negative answer is supposed, for which the next verse assigns the reason, 'For if Abraham was justified by works,' &c. The phrase *by works*, therefore, is substituted for *through the flesh*, as being, in this case, perfectly equivalent to it.

(2) *For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.* The apostle's mode of reasoning is so concise as often to leave some of the steps of his argument to be supplied, which, however, are almost always sufficiently obvious from the context. As just remarked, a negative answer is to be supposed to the question in the first verse. Abraham has not attained the favour of God through the flesh. The force of *for* at the beginning of this verse is then obvious, as introducing the reason for this answer. The most simple and satisfactory interpretation of this verse is the following. 'If Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but he hath not whereof to glory before God, and, therefore, he was not justified by works;' which is the conclusion which Paul intended to establish, and which he immediately confirms by the testimony of the Scriptures. The argument thus far is founded on the assumption, that no man can appear thus confidently before God, and boast of having done all that was required of him. If the doctrine of justification by works involves, as Paul shows it does, this claim to perfect obedience, it must be false. And that Abraham was not thus justified, he proves from the sacred record.

(3) *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.* The connexion of this verse with the preceding is this. Paul had just said Abraham had no ground of boasting with God; *For* what saith the Scripture? Does it refer the ground of Abraham's justification to his works? By no means. It declares he was justified by faith; which Paul immediately shows is equivalent to saying that he was justified gratuitously. The passage quoted by the apostle is Gen. 15: 6, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him (i. e. imputed to him) for righteousness." This is an important passage, as the phrase "to impute faith for righteousness" occurs repeatedly in Paul's writings. The primary meaning of the word here rendered *to count to*, or *to impute*, is *to reckon*, or *number*; 2 Chron. 5: 6, "Which could not be numbered for multitude;" Mark 15: 28, "He was numbered with transgressors;" see Isa. 53: 12, &c. &c. 2. It means *to esteem*, or *regard as something*, that is, to number as belonging to a certain class of things; Gen. 31: 15, "Are we not counted of him strangers;" Isa. 40:

17, &c. &c.; compare Job 19: 11. 33: 10, in the Hebrew. 3. It is used in the more general sense of *purposing*, *devising*, *considering*, *thinking*, &c. 4. In strict connexion with its primary meaning, it signifies *to impute, to set to one's account;* that is, to number among the things belonging to a man, or chargeable upon him. It generally implies the accessory idea, 'of treating one according to the nature of the thing imputed.' Thus, in the frequent phrase *to impute sin*, as 2 Sam. 19: 19, "Let not my Lord impute iniquity unto me," i. e. 'Let him not lay it to my charge, and treat me accordingly;' compare 1 Sam. 22: 15, in the Hebrew and Septuagint; Ps. 32: 2 (Septuagint 31), "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity," &c. &c. And in the New Testament, 2 Cor. 5: 19, "Not imputing unto men their trespasses;" 2 Tim. 4: 16, "*I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge," &c. &c. These, and numerous similar passages, render the scriptural idea of imputation perfectly clear. It is laying any thing to one's charge, and treating him accordingly. It produces no change in the individual to whom the imputation is made; it simply alters his relation to the law. As far as the meaning of the word is concerned, it is a matter of indifference whether the thing imputed belonged antecedently to the person to whom the imputation is made or not. Compare Lev. 17: 4, and vs. 6, 11 of this chapter, in which Paul speaks of righteousness being imputed to those to whom it does not personally belong.

The expression "faith was counted to him for righteousness" is variously explained. Some understand the word faith as including its object, i. e. the righteousness of Christ, so that it is not faith considered as an act that is imputed, but faith considered as including the merit which it apprehends and appropriates. But this interpretation is inconsistent with the connexion in which the passage occurs, both in the Old and New Testament.

Besides this view of the passage, there are three others founded on the different senses of the word *righteousness*. It may mean all that the law demands, complete obedience. If this sense of the word be adopted, then the passage means that faith was laid to his account as though it were complete obedience; it was taken for righteousness. This interpretation is perfectly natural and consistent with the constructure of the passage and the usage of the terms; it however is inconsistent with the apostle's doctrine. 1. It contradicts all those passages in which the sacred writers teach that men cannot be justified by any of their own works. Faith is as much a work as prayer, repentance, almsgiving, or any other act of obedience to God; and therefore, if we are justified on the ground of our faith, or if faith is taken in place of complete obedience to the law, we are justified by works. 2. It contradicts all those passages in which the merit of Christ, in any form, is said to be the ground of our acceptance. 3. It is inconsistent with the office assigned to faith. We are said to be justified *by* or *through* faith, but never *on account of* faith. The expression by "faith in his blood" admits of no

other interpretation than 'by means of faith in the blood of Christ as the ground of acceptance.' It lies in the nature of a sacrifice that the offering is the ground of acceptance; our confidence in it, or our faith, is the condition of its being accepted on our behalf. Faith therefore is the instrumental, but not the meritorious, cause of justification. 4. Accordingly the sacred writers never refer us to our faith, or to any thing in ourselves, as the ground of confidence towards God.

According to the second view the word *righteousness* is taken in a much more limited sense, and the phrase 'to impute faith for righteousness' is understood to mean 'faith was regarded as right, it was approved.' This interpretation also is perfectly consistent with usage. Thus Ps. 106: 31, it is said of the zeal of Phineas, "It was counted to him as righteousness." This, of course, does not mean that it was regarded as complete obedience to the law, and taken in its stead as the ground of justification. It means simply that his zeal was approved of. It was regarded, says Dr. Owen, "as a just and rewardable action." In like manner, Deut. 24: 13, it is said of returning a pledge, "It shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord thy God." Agreeably to the analogy of these passages the meaning of this clause may be, 'his faith was regarded as right, it secured the approbation of God:' how it did this must be learned from other passages.

The third interpretation assumes that the word translated *righteousness* means here, as it does in many other passages, *justification*. The sense then is, 'Faith was imputed to him for justification,' i. e. that he might be justified, or in order to his becoming and being treated as righteous; see 10: 4, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness," i. e. in order that every one that believes may be regarded as righteous. Nothing is more familiar than this use of the preposition here used by the apostle. It points out the design with which any thing is done, as "unto repentance," that men may repent, Matt. 3: 11; "unto death," that we may die, Rom. 6: 3. So 'unto salvation,' Rom. 10: 1; 'unto condemnation,' Luke 24: 20. Or it indicates the result; Rom. 10: 10, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," i. e. so that he is justified, regarded and treated as righteous. This view of the passage expresses accurately the apostle's meaning. It was not as 'one who works,' but as a believer, that Abraham was regarded in his justification. It was not works, but faith, that was imputed to him, in order to his being introduced into the number and blessings of the righteous. Faith, therefore, was not the ground of his justification, but the means of his being justified.

(4, 5) *Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt, but to him that worketh not*, &c. These verses are designed, in the first place, to vindicate the pertinency of the quotation from Scripture made in v. 3; by showing that the declaration 'faith was imputed for righteousness,' is a denial that works were the ground of Abraham's acceptance; and, secondly, that to justify by faith is to justify gratui-

tously, and therefore all passages which speak of gratuitous acceptance are in favour of the doctrine of justification by faith.

Now to him that worketh, that is, either emphatically 'to him who does all that is required of him;' or to 'him who seeks to be accepted on account of his works.' The former explanation is the better. The words then state a general proposition, 'To him that is obedient, or who performs a stipulated work, the recompense is not regarded as a gratuity, but as a debt.'

(5) *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, to him faith is counted for righteousness.* "To him that worketh not," i. e. who makes no pretence of earning or meriting a reward, but renouncing all dependence on his works, "believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly," to him, from the nature of the case, acceptance is a gratuity. It lies in the nature of the faith of which Paul speaks, that he who exercises it should feel and acknowledge that he is ungodly, and consequently undeserving of the favour of God. He, of course, in relying on the mercy of God, must acknowledge that his acceptance is a matter of grace, and not of debt. The meaning of the apostle is plainly this: 'To him that worketh the reward is a matter of debt, but to him who worketh not, but believes simply, the reward is a matter of grace.' Instead, however, of saying 'it is a matter of grace,' he uses as an equivalent expression, "to him faith is counted for righteousness." That is, he is justified by faith. To be justified by faith, therefore, is to be justified gratuitously, and not by works. It is thus he proves that the passage cited in v. 3, respecting Abraham, was pertinent to his purpose as an argument against justification by works. It at the same time shows that all passages which speak of gratuitous acceptance, may be cited in proof of his doctrine of justification by faith. The way is thus opened for his *second* argument, which is derived from the testimony of David.

It is to be remarked that Paul speaks of God as justifying the *ungodly*. Of course they are regarded and treated as righteous, not on the ground of their personal character; and it is further apparent that justification does not consist in making one inherently just or holy; for it is as *ungodly* that those who believe are freely justified for Christ's sake. It never was the doctrine of the reformation, or of the Lutheran and Calvinistic divines, that the imputation of righteousness affected the moral character of those concerned. It is true, whom God justifies he also sanctifies, but justification is not sanctification, and the imputation of righteousness is not the infusion of righteousness.

(6) *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works.* Paul's first argument in favour of gratuitous justification was from the case of Abraham; his second is from the testimony of David. The immediate connexion of this verse is with v. 5. At the conclusion of that verse it was said, to him who had no works faith is imputed in order to his justification, i. e

he is justified gratuitously, even as David speaks of the blessedness of him whom, although destitute of merit, God regards and treats as righteous. *Describeth the blessedness*, i. e. pronounces blessed. *To whom God imputeth righteousness without works*, that is, whom God regards and treats as righteous, although he is not in himself righteous. The meaning of this clause cannot be mistaken. 'To impute sin' is to lay sin to the charge of any one, and to treat him accordingly, as is universally admitted; so 'to impute righteousness' is to set righteousness to one's account, and to treat him accordingly. This righteousness does not, of course, belong antecedently to those to whom it is imputed, for they are ungodly and destitute of works. Here then is an imputation to men of what does not belong to them, and to which they have in themselves no claim. To impute righteousness is the apostle's definition of the term *to justify*. It is not making men inherently righteous, or morally pure, but it is regarding and treating them as just. This is done, not on the ground of personal character or works, but on the ground of the righteousness of Christ. As this is dealing with men, not according to merit, but in a gracious manner, the passage cited from Ps. 32 : 1, 2, is precisely in point, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." That is, blessed is the man who, although a sinner, is regarded and treated as righteous. As the remission of sin is necessarily connected with restoration to God's favour, the apostle speaks of it as the whole of justification; not that the idea of remission exhausts the whole idea of justification, but it necessarily implies the rest. In like manner, in Eph. 1 : 7, it is said, "In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin;" which does not imply that forgiveness is the whole of redemption, that the gift of the Spirit, the glorification of the body, and eternal life, which are so constantly spoken of as fruits of Christ's work and parts of "the purchased possession" (Eph. 1 : 14), are to be excluded.

(9) *Cometh this blessedness upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?* &c. The apostle's third argument, commencing with this verse and continuing to the 12th, has special reference to circumcision. He had proved that Abraham was not justified on account of his works generally; he now proves that circumcision is neither the ground nor condition of his acceptance. The proof of this point is brief and conclusive. It is admitted that Abraham was justified. The only question is, was it before or after his circumcision? If before, it certainly was not on account of it. As it was before, circumcision must have had some other object.

'Cometh *this blessedness*.' There is nothing in the original to answer to the word *cometh*, although some word of the kind must be supplied. The word rendered *blessedness* means more properly 'declaration of blessedness.' 'This declaration of blessedness, is it *upon*, i. e. is it about, does it concern the circumcision only?' The preposition used by the apostle often points out the direction of an action, or the object concerning

which any thing is said. This question has not direct reference to the persons to whom the offers of acceptance are applicable, as though it were equivalent to asking, 'Is this blessedness confined to the Jews, or may it be extended to the Gentiles also?' because this is not the subject now in hand. It is the ground or condition of acceptance, and not the persons to whom the offer is to be made, that is now under consideration. The question, therefore, is, in substance, this, 'Does this declaration of blessedness relate to the circumcised, as such? Is circumcision necessary to justification?' which is the blessing of which Paul is speaking.

For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. *For* merely indicates the resumption of the case of Abraham. The preceding verses are occupied with the testimony of David, which decided nothing as to the point of circumcision. To determine whether this rite was a necessary condition of acceptance, it was requisite to refer again to the case of Abraham. To decide the point presented in the question at the beginning of the verse, the apostle argues from the position already established. It is conceded or proved that Abraham was justified by faith; to determine whether circumcision is necessary, we have only to ask, under what circumstances was he thus justified, before or after circumcision?

(10) *How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision or uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.* Of course, his circumcision, which was long subsequent to his justification, could not be either the ground or necessary condition of his acceptance with God.

(11) *And he received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of the faith which* he had, yet *being uncircumcised*, &c. As Paul had shown that circumcision was not the condition of justification, it became necessary to declare its true nature and design. *The sign of circumcision*, i. e. circumcision which was a sign (genitive of apposition); as "the earnest of the Spirit," for 'the Spirit which is an earnest,' 2 Cor. 1: 22. *The seal of the righteousness of faith*, &c. The phrase *righteousness of faith* is a concise expression 'for righteousness which is attained by faith,' or, as it stands more fully in Phil. 3: 9, "the righteousness of God, which is by faith." The word righteousness, in such connexions, includes, with the idea of excellence or obedience, that of consequent blessedness. It is the 'state of acceptableness with God.' The circumcision of Abraham was designed to confirm to him the fact, that he was regarded and treated by God as righteous, through faith, which was the means of his becoming interested in the promise of redemption. This was a faith which Abraham had, *being yet uncircumcised*, literally, *by* or *with* uncircumcision; see ch. 2: 27, where the same preposition is used, as it is here, to indicate the state or condition in which a person is.

That he might be the father of all that believe, though they be not circumcised, &c. 'That he might be;' the form of expression in the original may signify either the design or result. If the former, as it is taken

in our version, the meaning is, that the annunciation of the justification of Abraham before his circumcision, was with the design that he might be the father of uncircumcised believers. If the latter, the sense is, 'He was thus justified, *hence* he is,' &c. Either method suits the context; the latter seems, however, the more natural. The word *father* is often used to express the general idea of dependence, as of a disciple on a master (hence it is applied to teachers in religion, Abbas, Papa, Pope, Pater, the Fathers, &c.); of a follower on a leader, &c. Hence, the inventor or author of any thing is called a *father*; Gen. 4: 20, "The father of all those who handle the organ." Abraham is called the "father of the faithful," as their leader, from being the first conspicuous example of faith recorded in the Scriptures, and from being the head of the family of God, i. e. of his peculiar people. As the church, under the Old Testament, stood in this relation to Abraham, it was not disowned by those introduced into it, when the middle wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles was broken down. To be a child of Abraham is to be like him, to have the same faith that he had, Gal. 3: 7; and, of course, as their head, leader, and example, Abraham is the father of all those who believe.

Of all that believe, though they be not circumcised, literally, 'of all believing with (or in) uncircumcision;' see the previous clause, and ch. 2: 27. *That righteousness might be imputed unto them also.* The connexion and design of these words are not very clear, and they are, therefore, variously explained. They may be considered as explanatory of the former clause, and, therefore, connected with the first part of the verse. The sense would then be, 'Abraham was justified, being yet uncircumcised, that he might be the father of believers, although uncircumcised, that is, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.' But the logical connexion is not thus very plain, as the justification of Abraham was not designed to secure the justification of others. This clause is most commonly regarded as a parenthesis, designed to indicate the point of resemblance between Abraham and those of whom he is called the father. 'He is the father of uncircumcised believers, since they also are justified by faith as he was.' *Righteousness was imputed to them*; see above, vs. 3, 6.

(12) *And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk*, &c. "*Father of circumcision*" means 'the father of the circumcised.' As, in Hebrew, the expression occurs "father to," as well as "father of," Paul uses the former expression here, 'Father *to* them;' see 2 Sam. 7: 14. Heb. 1: 5. The meaning of this verse is doubtful. Agreeably to our version, which adheres closely to the Greek, the meaning is, 'Abraham is not the father of the uncircumcised believers only, as stated in v. 11, but he is the father of the circumcised also, provided they follow the example of his faith.' According to this view, as the 11th verse declares him to be the father of believing Gentiles, this presents him as the father of believing Jews, i. e. of those

Jews which have some better bond of connexion with him than circumcision merely. But, according to another interpretation, this verse includes both classes of his spiritual seed. 'He is the father of the circumcision, and not of the circumcision only, but of those also who follow his faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised.' The construction in the Greek is in favour of the former method. The expression is, 'To those who are not of the circumcision only, but, &c.' instead of being, 'Not to those only who are,' &c., as the latter interpretation would require; compare v. 16.

Verses 13—16 contain two additional arguments in favour of the apostle's doctrine. The first, vs. 13, 14, is the same as that presented more at length in Gal. 3: 18, &c., and is founded on the nature of a covenant. The promise, having been made to Abraham (and his seed) on the condition of faith, cannot now, consistently with fidelity, be made to depend on obedience to the law. The second argument, vs. 15, 16, is from the nature of the law itself.

(13) *For the promise that he should be heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed*, &c. The word *for* does not connect this verse with the one immediately preceding, as a proof of the insufficiency of circumcision. It rather marks the introduction of a new argument in favour of the general proposition which the chapter is designed to establish. As Abraham was not justified for his circumcision, so neither was it on account of his obedience to the law. The promise here spoken of is, that Abraham and his seed should be the heirs of the world. The word *heir* in Scripture frequently means *secure possessor*, Heb. 1: 2. 6: 17. 11: 7, &c. This use of the term probably arose from the fact, that among the Jews, possession by inheritance was much more secure and permanent than that obtained by purchase. As no such promise as that mentioned in this verse is contained, in so many words, in the Old Testament, the apostle must have designed to express what he knew to be the purport of those actually given. The expression, however, has been variously explained. 1. Some understand the *world* to mean the land of Canaan merely. But in the first place, this is a very unusual, if not an entirely unexampled use of the word. And, in the second place, this explanation is inconsistent with the context; for Paul has reference to a promise of which, as appears from v. 16, believing Gentiles were to partake. 2. Others understand the apostle to refer to the promise that Abraham should be the father of many nations, Gen. 17: 5, and his posterity be as numerous as the stars of heaven, Gen. 15: 5; promises which they limit to his natural descendants, who, being widely scattered, may be said, in a limited sense, to possess the world. But this interpretation is irreconcilable with v. 16. 3. Besides the promises already referred to, it was also said, that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed, Gen. 12: 3. This, as Paul explains it, Gal. 3: 16, &c., had direct reference to the blessings of redemption through Jesus Christ, who was the seed of Abraham. And here, too, he speaks of blessings of which

all believers partake. The possession of the world, therefore, here intended, must be understood in a manner consistent with these passages. The expression is frequently taken in a general sense, as indicating general prosperity and happiness. "To be heir of the world" would then mean to be prosperous and happy, in the best sense of the words. Reference is made, in support of this interpretation, to such passages as Matt. 5 : 5, "The meek shall inherit the earth;" Ps. 25 : 13, "The seed of the righteous shall inherit the earth;" Ps. 37 : 11. The promise then, to be the heir of the world, is a general promise of blessedness. And as the happiness promised to believers, or the pious as such, is, of course, the happiness consequent on religion, and is its reward, the promise in this sense may include all the blessings of redemption. So in Gal. 3 : 14, Paul uses the expression "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles," as equivalent to saying, 'that all the blessings of the gospel might come upon them." 4. Or the promises in question may have reference to the actual possession of the world by the spiritual seed of Abraham, and Christ their head. The declaration that Abraham should be the father of many nations, and that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude, included far more than that his natural descendants should be very numerous. If they who are of faith 'are the seed of Abraham, and heirs of the promise,' Gal. 3 : 9, 29, then will the promise, as stated by the apostle, have its literal accomplishment; when the kingdoms of this world are given to the saints of the most high God (Dan. 7 : 27), and when the uttermost parts of the earth become the possession of Christ. In this sense, the promise includes the universal prevalence of the true religion, involving, of course, the advent of Christ, the establishment of his kingdom, and all its consequent blessings.

The promise to Abraham and his seed was not *through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.* That is, it was not on condition of obedience to the law, but on condition of his having that righteousness which is obtained by faith. *Through the law* is, therefore, equivalent to *through the works of the law,* as appears from its opposition to the latter clause, 'righteousness of faith.' By the *law* is to be understood the whole rule of duty, as in other passages of the same kind; see 3 : 20. In this sense it of course includes the Mosaic law, which, to the Jews, was the most prominent portion of the revealed will of God, and by obedience to which especially they hoped for the mercy of God.

(14) *For if they who are of the law be heirs,* &c. The original condition being faith, if another be substituted the covenant is broken, the promise violated, and the condition made of none effect. "They who are of the law" sometimes, as v. 16, means the Jews, i. e. those who have the law; compare v. 12, "Those of circumcision," &c. But here it means *legalists,* those who seek justification by the works of the law; as 'those who are of faith' are *believers,* those who seek justification by faith; compare Gal. 3 : 10, "As many as are of the works of the law are

under the curse," i. e. as many as seek acceptance by their own works. The apostle's meaning, therefore, obviously is, that if those who rely upon their own works are the heirs of the promise, and are accepted on the condition of obedience to the law, the whole covenant is broken, *faith is made void*, and *the promise made of none effect*. "Is made void" is rendered useless; see 1 Cor. 1: 17, "The cross of Christ is made useless," 9: 15, &c.; compare 1 Cor. 15: 17, "Your faith is vain," not only without foundation, but of no use. *The promise is made of none effect*, i. e. is invalidated; see ch. 3: 3, 31.

(15) *Because the law worketh wrath*, &c. This verse is not to be connected with the 14th, as the punctuation in our version would intimate, as though it contained a proof of the declaration there made, that faith and the promise would be invalidated if works were made the ground of acceptance. For although it is true that this conclusion would follow from the nature of the law, inasmuch as it requires perfect obedience, and all who trust in it are under the curse, and of course not the heirs of the promise; yet this idea is not presented as a proof that the promise must fail. That was proved in a different way in the previous verse. The argument from the nature of the law is intended to bear on the general proposition that justification is not by works. This verse, therefore, contains the fourth argument in the apostle's reasoning in support of his main doctrine.

Worketh wrath, i. e. causes men to suffer wrath or punishment. This, however, the law does in two ways, and, therefore, there are two methods of explaining this verse. The law is condemnatory, its sanction or penalty is an essential part of it, and it is only in virtue of law that sin is punished; for sin is not imputed or punished where there is no law; or, where there is no law there is no transgression. The idea and argument then are, that it is the office of the law to condemn, and not to justify. As it requires perfect obedience, and says, "cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them," all who are under the law are under the curse. For sinners, therefore, salvation by the law is from its very nature impossible. According to this view the argument of the apostle is analogous to that in Gal. 3: 10. But there is another way in which the law works wrath; it excites and exasperates the evil passions of the heart. Not from any defect, indeed, in the law itself, but from the nature of sin. This idea the apostle frequently presents, 7: 5, &c. 8: 3. The meaning then is, that the law which, instead of freeing men from sin, incidentally renders these transgressions more numerous and conspicuous, and thus brings them more and more under condemnation, is not, from its nature, capable of securing the justification of men. This is perhaps the most commonly received view of the passage. The former, however, seems more natural, and better suited to the context.

For where there is no law there is no transgression. The meaning given to this clause depends upon the view taken of the preceding one

Calvin and others understand it as explaining the method in which the law works wrath, or calls down the displeasure of God. It is because sin, by the knowledge imparted by the law, is rendered less excusable, and deserving of severer punishment. *Transgression* is understood emphatically for the contumacious violation of the known will of God. But, according to the former of the two explanations given of the first clause, this more naturally expresses the general idea that law and transgression are correlative terms; the latter implies the former. If there were no law there could be no transgression, and therefore no punishment. It is the law, therefore, which gives sin its condemning power. This being the case, it is obvious that the law which secures the punishment of sin, cannot be the means of the sinner's justification.

(16) *Therefore it is of faith, that* it might be *of grace; to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed*, &c. This and the following verse contain the conclusion from the previous reasoning, and especially from the two preceding arguments. The expression in the original is simply *therefore of faith*. It matters little, as to the sense, whether the words *we are heirs* be supplied from v. 14, or the word *promise* from v. 13. 'Therefore the promise is of faith,' that it might be of grace, see vs. 4, 5, i. e. not of works; for if of works, as Paul had just shown, the covenant would be broken, and the promise invalidated. If this condition be insisted upon, no one, from the very nature of the law, can be saved. But, being of faith and gratuitous, it is sure to all the seed. The words rendered *to the end* are the same as those which occur v. 11, and express either the design or result. The sense may therefore be, 'It is of faith, in order that it might be sure,' &c. or, 'It is of faith, and hence is sure,' &c. *To all the seed*, i. e. all the children of Abraham, as well those *which are of the law*, i. e. Jews, see Acts 10: 45, &c., as those *which are of the faith of Abraham*, i. e. the Gentiles, whose only bond of union with Abraham is the possession of the same faith which he had; see Gal. 3: 7, &c. *Who is the father of us all.* It is in this sense that Abraham is the father, the head and leader of all believers who are his children, because they are like him, and heirs of the promise made to him, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. Gal. 3: 29, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

(17) *As it is written, I have made thee father of many nations*, Gen. 17: 5. This declaration, the apostle informs us, contains a great deal more than the assurance that the natural descendants of Abraham should be very numerous. Taken in connexion with the promise that "in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed," it refers to his spiritual as well as his natural seed, and finds its full accomplishment in the extension of the blessing promised to him to those of all nations who are his children by faith. This clause is very properly marked as a parenthesis, as the preceding one, "who is the father of us all," must be connected immediately with the following words, *before him whom he be-*

heved, even *God who quickeneth the dead*, &c. The original here is very difficult. The most probable explanation is that which resolves the sentence much in the same manner as in our own version, "Before God, in whom he believed," i. e. he is the father of us all, in the sight or estimation of that God in whom he believed.

God is here described as *quickening the dead, and calling those things which be not as though they were.* This passage is very variously explained. It may be considered, 1. As a description of the omnipotence of God. The promise made to Abraham seemed impossible of fulfilment, yet he believed in that Almighty God 'who quickens the dead, and calls, i. e. commands and controls, things that are not as though they were.' 2. It may be explained more in reference to the divine omniscience. God foresaw how numerous would be the spiritual seed of Abraham. He was declared to be the father of many nations in the sight of that God who sees the end from the beginning, who wakes up the dead, and before whom the future and the present, the nonexistent and the already existing, are alike. Both these ideas may be united; the object of Abraham's faith was the almighty and all-seeing God, who sees and controls the living and the dead, the future and the present, with equal ease. The idea of the divine power is so prominently presented in the following verses, 19—21, that it certainly should not be omitted here. When Paul speaks of God, especially as the object of faith, it is not unusual for him to add some descriptive clause, declarative of some of his attributes or acts, as the special ground of confidence; compare v. 24.

DOCTRINES.

1. If the greatest and best men of the old dispensation had to renounce entirely dependence upon their works, and to accept of the favour of God as a gratuity, justification by works must, for all men, be impossible, vs. 2, 3.

2. No man can glory, that is, complacently rejoice, in his own goodness in the sight of God. And this every man of an enlightened conscience feels. The doctrine of justification by works, therefore, is inconsistent with the inward testimony of conscience, and can never give true peace of mind, v. 2.

3. The two methods of justification cannot be united. They are as inconsistent as wages and a free gift. If of works, it is not of grace; and if of grace, it is not of works, vs. 4, 5.

4. As God justifies the ungodly, it cannot be on the ground of their own merit, but must be by the imputation of a righteousness which does not personally belong to them, and which they received by faith, vs. 5, 6, 11.

5. The blessings of the gospel, and the method of justification which it proposes, are suited to all men; and are not to be confined by sectarian limits, or bound down to ceremonial observances, vs. 9—11.

6. The sacraments and ceremonies of the church, although in the

highest degree useful when viewed in their proper light, become ruinous when perverted into grounds of confidence. What answers well as a sign is a miserable substitute for the thing signified. Circumcision will not serve for righteousness, nor baptism for regeneration, v. 10.

7. As Abraham is the father of all believers, all believers are brethren. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free among them as Christians, vs. 11, 12.

8. The seed of Abraham, or true believers, with Jesus Christ their head, are the heirs of the world. To them it will ultimately belong; even the uttermost parts of the earth shall be their possession, v. 13.

9. To speak of justification by obedience to a law which we have broken is a solecism. That which condemns cannot justify, v. 15.

10. No blessing is sure for sinners that is not gratuitous. A promise suspended on obedience they could never render sure. One entirely gratuitous needs only to be accepted to become ours, v. 16.

11. It is the entire freeness of the gospel, and its requiring faith as the condition of acceptance, which renders it suited to all ages and nations, v. 16.

12. The proper object of faith is the divine promise; or God considered as able and determined to accomplish his word, v. 17.

REMARKS.

1. The renunciation of a legal self-righteous spirit is the first requisition of the gospel. This must be done, or the gospel cannot be accepted. 'He who works,' i. e. who trusts in his works, refuses to be saved by grace, vs. 1—5.

2. The more intimately we are acquainted with our own hearts and with the character of God, the more ready shall we be to renounce our own righteousness and to trust in his mercy, vs. 2, 3.

3. Those only are truly happy and secure who, under a sense of ill-desert and helplessness, cast themselves upon the grace and promise of God, vs. 7, 8.

4. Nothing is more natural, and nothing has occurred more extensively in the Christian church, than the perversion of the means of grace into grounds of dependence. Thus it was with circumcision, and thus it is with baptism, the Lord's supper; thus too with prayer, fasting, &c. &c. This is the rock on which millions have been shipwrecked, vs. 9—12.

5. There is no hope for those, who, forsaking the grace of God, take refuge in a law which worketh wrath, v. 15.

6. All things are ours if we are Christ's. Heirs of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, v. 13.

7. As the God in whom believers trust, is he to whom all things are known, and all things are subject, they should be strong in faith, giving glory to God, v. 17.

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CHAP. 4: 18—25.

18Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: 20he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

ANALYSIS.

The object of this section is the illustration of the faith of Abraham, and the application of his case to our instruction. With regard to Abraham's faith, the apostle states, first, its object, viz. the divine promise, v. 18. He then illustrates its strength, by a reference to the apparent impossibility of the thing promised, vs. 19, 20. The ground of this confidence was the power and veracity of God, v. 21. The consequence was that Abraham was justified by his faith, v. 22. Hence it is to be inferred that this is the true method of justification; for the record was made to teach us this truth. We are situated as Abraham was; we are called upon to believe in the Almighty God, who, by raising up Christ from the dead, has accepted him as the propitiation for our sins, vs. 23—25.

COMMENTARY.

18) *Who against hope believed in hope*, that is, who against all apparent ground of hope, confidently believed. *In hope*, with hope, or confidently, Acts 2: 26. 1 Cor. 9: 10, &c. &c. *That he might become the father of many nations.* This clause, as it stands in the Greek, may express either the design with which he believed, or the result of his believing, or finally the object of his faith. 'He believed in order that he might be the father;' or, 'He believed, and hence became the father,' &c.; or, 'He believed that he should be the father,' &c. The last would seem best to suit the context, but it is not so consistent with the construction of the passage. *According to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be.* This is a reference to the promise which was the object of Abraham's faith. It is a quotation from Gen. 15: 5. The word *so* refers to the stars of heaven, mentioned in the passage as it stands in the Old Testament. The promise, therefore, particularly intended by the apostle, is, that Abraham should be the father of many nations, or that his seed

should be as numerous as the stars. It has already been seen, however, that the apostle understood this promise as including far more than that the natural descendants of Abraham should be very numerous; see vs. 13, 17. The expression in the text is a concise allusion to the various promises made to the ancient patriarch, which had reference to all nations being blessed through him. The promise of a numerous posterity, therefore, included the promise of Christ and his redemption. This is evident, 1. Because Paul had been speaking of a promise, v. 16, in which believing Jews and Gentiles were alike interested; see Gal. 3: 14. 2. Because Paul asserts and argues that the seed promised to Abraham, and to which the promise related, was Jesus Christ, Gal. 3: 16. 3. So Abraham himself understood it, according to the declaration of our Saviour; John 8: 56, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." He looked forward under the greatest discouragements to the Redeemer as yet to come; we have the easier task to look back to the same Deliverer, who has died for our sins, and risen again for our justification, v. 25.

(19) *And not being weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead*, &c. The 18th verse had stated it was contrary to all appearances that Abraham believed; this verse states the circumstances which rendered the accomplishment of the promise an apparent impossibility, viz. his own advanced age, and the age and barrenness of his wife. These circumstances he did not consider, that is, he did not allow them to have weight, he did not fix his mind on the difficulties of the case. Had he been weak in faith, and allowed himself to dwell on the obstacles to the fulfilment of the divine promise, he would have staggered.*

(20) *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief*, &c. The word rendered *to stagger* signifies, in the middle voice, *to contend with any one, to be in strife with one's self, to doubt* or *hesitate*. Matt. 21: 21, "If ye have faith, and doubt not," &c. 'He was not in doubt *as to* the promise,' &c.; see the same use of the preposition here used, Acts 25: 20. Luke 12: 21, &c. &c. *But was strong in faith, giving glory to God*, that is, giving God credit for veracity and power, influenced by a reverential conviction of the truth and ability of him who had given the promise. *To give glory to God* is to feel and act in a manner becoming the divine character, see 1 Sam. 6: 5; and also in such a way as to cause him to be honoured by others, Josh. 7: 19, &c. &c. To believe the divine declarations is, therefore, the highest honour we can render God, and to disbelieve them is a great offence to the divine majesty; compare 1 John 5: 10.

(21) *And being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.* This verse is an amplification and explanation of the

* The fact that Abraham, many years after the promise of the birth of Isaac, had several children by Keturah, can create no difficulty, as the effect of the divine power doubtless remained.

last clause of the preceding one. He gave glory to God by being fully persuaded that he was able to perform his promise. The ground of Abraham's confidence, therefore, was not the nature of the thing promised, nor the facility of its attainment, but the divine character and attributes.

(22) *Therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.* The *it* of course refers to the extraordinary faith spoken of above. It was imputed to him in order to his being regarded and treated as righteous; see above on v. 3.

(23) *Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him.* This and the following verses contain the application of the case of Abraham to our instruction. Paul says that the record concerning the justification of Abraham was not made merely that we might know that he was a righteous man; or as though justification by faith were something peculiar to him.

(24) *But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe,* &c. The fact that faith was imputed to Abraham for his justification was placed on record that we might learn the true method of justification. As all men are sinners, and consequently stand in the same relation to God, the method in which he justifies one is the same as that in which he justifies all; see 3: 9, 22. The object of our faith is described as God *that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.* The object of Abraham's faith was the Almighty and Omniscient God, who had promised to raise up to him a seed in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The object of our faith is this same God considered as recognising Jesus our Lord to be this long-promised seed and deliverer, by raising him from the dead.

When we are said to believe in God who raised up Christ, it of course implies that we believe that Christ was thus raised up. As the resurrection of Christ was the great decisive evidence of the divinity of his mission, and the validity of all his claims, to believe that he rose from the dead is to believe he was the Son of God, the propitiation for our sins, the Redeemer and the Lord of men; that he was all he claimed to be, and had accomplished all he purposed to effect; compare Rom. 10: 9. Acts 1: 22. 4: 33. 1 Cor. 15, and other passages, in which the resurrection of Christ is spoken of as the corner-stone of the gospel, as the great fact to be proved, and which, being proved, involves all the rest.

(25) *Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.* This verse is a comprehensive statement of the gospel Christ was delivered *unto death* for our offences, i. e. on account of them, and for their expiation; see Isa. 53: 5, 6. Heb. 9: 28. 1 Pet. 2: 24. This delivering of Christ is ascribed to God, Rom. 8: 32, and elsewhere; and to himself, Tit. 2: 14. Gal. 1: 4. It was by the divine purpose and counsel he suffered for the expiation of sin; and he gave himself willingly to death. "He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

And was raised again for our justification, i. e. that we might be jus-

tified. The resurrection of Christ was necessary for our justification, inasmuch as it was the formal acceptance of his sufferings, as the expiation for our sins. Had he not risen we should be yet under condemnation, 1 Cor. 15: 17. But as he rose from the dead, he was accepted of the Father, and appeared as the first-fruits, i. e. the forerunner and pledge of the resurrection, and complete salvation of all his people. In the epistle to the Hebrews the apostle presents this idea under another form. As it was necessary, on the great day of atonement, that the high priest should not only slay the victim at the altar, but enter into the most holy place, and sprinkle the blood upon the mercy-seat; so our High Priest, having suffered in the outer court, has passed into the heavens with his own blood, there to appear for our justification; that is, to secure for us the continued application of the merits of his death. Either, therefore, as the evidence of the acceptance of his sufferings as our substitute, or as a necessary step towards securing the application of their merit to our benefit, the resurrection of Christ was essential to our justification.

DOCTRINES.

1. Faith is an operative assent to the divine testimony, not the reception of truth, as something which can be proved by our own arguments, vs. 18, 20.

2. When faith is genuine it is founded on correct apprehensions of the divine character, and has a controlling influence over the heart and life, vs. 20, 21.

3. The method of salvation has never been changed; Abraham was not only saved by faith, but the object of his faith was the same as the object of ours, vs. 24, 17.

4. The resurrection of Christ, as an historical fact, established by the most satisfactory evidence (see 1 Cor. 15), authenticates the whole gospel. As surely as Christ has risen, so surely shall believers be saved, v. 25.

REMARKS.

1. The true way to have our faith strengthened is not to consider the difficulties in the way of the thing promised, but the character and resources of God who has made the promise, v. 19.

2. It is as possible for faith to be strong when the thing promised is most improbable as when it is probable. Abraham's faith should serve as an example and admonition to us. He believed that a Saviour would be born from his family when his having a son was an apparent impossibility. We are only called upon to believe that the Saviour has been born, has suffered and risen again from the dead: facts established on the strongest historical evidence, vs. 20, 24, 25.

3. Unbelief is a very great sin, as it implies a doubt of the veracity and power of God, vs. 20, 21.

4. All that is written in the Scriptures is for our instruction. What is

promised, commanded or threatened (unless of a strictly personal nature) although addressed originally to individuals, belongs to them only as representatives of classes of men, and is designed for all of similar character and in similar circumstances, v. 23.

5. The two great truths of the gospel are, that Christ died as a sacrifice for our sins, and that he rose again for our justification. Whosoever, from the heart, believes these truths shall be saved, v. 25. Rom. 10: 9.

6. The denial of the propitiatory death of Christ, or of his resurrection from the dead, is a denial of the gospel. It is a refusing to be saved according to the method which God has appointed, v. 25.

CHAPTER V.

CONTENTS.

From verse 1 to 11 inclusive, the apostle deduces some of the more obvious and consolatory inferences from the doctrine of gratuitous justification. From the 12th verse to the end, he illustrates his great principle of the imputation of righteousness, or the regarding and treating "the many" as righteous, on account of the righteousness of one man Christ Jesus, by a reference to the fall of all men in Adam.

CHAP. 5: 1—11.

[1]Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: [2]by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3]And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; [4]and patience, experience; and experience, hope: [5]and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. [6]For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. [7]For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. [8]But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. [9]Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. [10]For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. [11]And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

ANALYSIS.

The first consequence of justification by faith is, that we have peace with God, v. 1. The second, that we have ready access to his presence,

a sense of his present favour and assurance of future glory, v. 2. The third, that our afflictions, instead of being inconsistent with the divine favour, are made directly conducive to the confirmation of our hope; the Holy Spirit bearing witness to the fact that we are the objects of the love of God, vs. 3—5. The fourth, the certainty of the final salvation of all believers. This is argued from the freeness and greatness of the divine love. Its freeness being manifested in its excercise towards the unworthy; and its greatness in the gift of the Son of God, vs. 6—10. Salvation is not merely a future though certain good; it is a present and abundant joy, v. 11.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God*, that is, we are reconciled to God. We are no longer the objects of the divine displeasure, his favour having been propitiated by the death of his Son, v. 10. As a consequence of this reconciliation, we have conscious peace with God, that is, we have neither any longer the present upbraidings of an unappeased conscience, nor the dread of divine vengeance. Both of these ideas are included in the peace here spoken of. It is peculiarly an evangelical doctrine, that pious affections are the fruit of this reconciliation to God, and not the cause of it. Paul says this peace is the result of justification by faith. He who relies on his works for justification can have no peace. He can neither remove the displeasure of God, nor quiet the apprehension of punishment. Peace is not the result of mere gratuitous forgiveness, but of justification, of a reconciliation founded upon atonement. The enlightened conscience is never satisfied until it sees that God can be just in justifying the ungodly; that sin has been punished, the justice of God satisfied, his law honoured and vindicated. It is when he thus sees justice and mercy embracing each other, that the believer has that peace which passes all understanding; that sweet quiet of the soul in which deep humility, in view of personal unworthiness, is mingled with the warmest gratitude to that Saviour by whose blood God's justice has been satisfied and conscience appeased. Hence, Paul says we have this peace *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. It is not through ourselves in any way, neither by our own merit nor our own efforts. It is all of grace. It is all through Jesus Christ. And this the justified soul is ever anxious to acknowledge.

(2) *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand*, &c. It would seem obvious, from the use of the word *also*, that this verse expresses a distinct idea from the preceding. The most common and natural construction of this passage is to connect the word *grace* with *access*, i. e. "access into this grace." *Grace*, then, or *favour* expresses the same idea as *peace with God*, in the preceding verse; and the difference between the two verses is to be found in the word *access* or *introduction*. The meaning then is, 'We are not only indebted to Jesus Christ for peace with God, but also for our introduction into this state

of favour;' which includes, of course, liberty of access to God. *Where in we stand*, i. e. which we now possess or enjoy. Or the phrase may be taken in a forensic sense, as in Ps. 1: 5. 130: 3, 'In which state of grace we stand acquitted or justified.' The word *wherein* must refer to *grace*, the immediate antecedent, and not to faith, the more remote one. The figurative language here used is peculiarly expressive and appropriate. As those only who were in the favour of ancient monarchs could freely approach them, and even such had generally to be led forward by an 'introducer;' so Christ, our introducer, secures access for us into the favour and presence of God. We come not of ourselves, but, abashed and humbled, are led along by our kind mediator.

And rejoice in hope of the glory of God. There are two benefits specified in this verse. The first, our present introduction into a state of favour and free access to God; and the second, the joyful hope of *the glory of God*, that is, the glory of which God is the author. The word *glory* is often used in reference to future blessedness, to show that the happiness to be enjoyed hereafter is connected with the exaltation of all our powers, and of our sphere of activity.

(3) *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.* Not only have we this introduction into the divine favour, and this hope of future glory, but we glory in tribulations also. Since our relation to God is changed, the relation of all things to us is changed. Afflictions, which before were the expressions of God's displeasure, are now the benevolent and beneficent manifestations of his love. And, instead of being inconsistent with our filial relation to him, they serve to prove that he regards and loves us as his children; Rom. 8: 18. Heb. 12: 6. Tribulations, therefore, although for the present they are not joyous but grievous, become to the believer matter of joy and thankfulness. The way in which afflictions become thus useful, and consequently the ground of rejoicing, the apostle immediately explains. They give occasion for the exercise of the Christian graces, and these, from their nature, produce hope, which is sustained and authenticated by the witness of the Holy Spirit. *Tribulation worketh patience.* The word rendered *patience* signifies also *constancy, perseverance.* Tribulation gives occasion to exercise and manifest a patient and persevering adherence to truth and duty under trials.

(4) *And patience, experience; and experience, hope.* The word translated *experience* means properly, 1. *Trial* or *experiment.* 2 Cor. 8: 2, "Great trial of affliction," i. e. trial made by affliction. 2. It means the result of such trial, *evidence, experience.* 3. By another remove, *that which has been tested* and *approved.* As one or the other of these significations is adopted, the clause is variously interpreted. It may mean, 'The endurance of afflictions leads to the trying or testing of one's own heart;' or 'It occasions the experience of the divine goodness, or of gracious exercises;' or 'It produces a state of mind which is the object of approbation;' or 'It produces evidence, viz. of a gracious state.' This

last seems most consistent with Paul's use of the word; see 2 Cor. 2: 9, "That I may know the proof (evidence) of you; whether ye be obedient," &c.; Phil. 2: 22, "Ye know the proof of him," &c. This sense suits the context also. 'Tribulation calls forth the exercise of patience; and the exercise of this patience or constancy affords evidence of our being in the favour of God, and therefore produces hope.'

(5) *And hope maketh not ashamed.* The hope which true believers entertain, founded on the very nature of pious exercises, shall never disappoint them, Ps. 22: 5. The ground of this assurance, however, is not the strength of our purpose, or confidence in our own goodness, but the love of God. The latter clause of the verse assigns the reason why the Christian's hope shall not be found delusive; it is because *the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us.* 'The love of God' is his love to us, and not ours to him, as appears from the following verses, in which the apostle illustrates the greatness and freeness of this love by a reference to the unworthiness of its objects. *To shed abroad* is to communicate abundantly, and hence to evince clearly, Acts 2: 17. 10: 45. Tit. 3: 6. This manifestation of divine love is not any external revelation of it in the works of providence, or even in redemption, but it is *in our hearts.* And this inward persuasion that we are the objects of the love of God is not the mere result of the examination of evidence, nor is it a vain illusion, but it is produced by the Holy Ghost. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God," Rom. 8: 16. 2 Cor. 1: 21, 22. Eph. 1: 14. As, however, the Spirit never contradicts himself, he never bears witness that "the children of the devil" are the children of God; that is, that the unholy, the disobedient, the proud, or malicious, are the objects of the divine favour. Any reference, therefore, by the immoral, to the witness of the Spirit in their favour must be vain and delusive.

(6) *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* This and the following verses to the 11th contain an illustration of the freeness and greatness of the love of God, designed to prove the certainty of the salvation of believers. The *for* either connects this verse with the close of the fifth, as introducing the illustration of the love there spoken of; or the logical connexion is with the declaration of the 2d, "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" and of the 5th, "hope maketh not ashamed." This latter, from the context of the passage, seems the more natural. *When we were without strength,* or *weak.* The word thus translated may mean *destitute of resources* or *miserable;* see Prov. 22: 22. 31: 5, 9, where the Greek word used by Paul is used in this sense by the LXX. Or it may mean *morally weak,* i. e. *wicked.* In favour of this latter interpretation is the context. The *weak* are the *ungodly* of this verse, and the *sinners* of verse 8. It is probable both ideas were in the apostle's mind, and that he intended to express, by the word, the weakness and misery consequent on sin, or our helplessness as sinners. *In due time,* i. e. at the appointed and

appropriate time; see Job 5: 26. Isa. 60: 22. Mark 1: 15. Gal. 4: 4. *Christ died for the ungodly.* The preposition rendered *for*, in such connexions, signifies not merely *for the benefit of*, but *in the place of*. This appears to be its meaning in v. 7, which fixes its meaning here; compare Matt. 20: 28, "To give his life a ransom for many." with 1 Tim. 2: 6, "Who gave himself a ransom for all." Christ died not merely *for* us, but *in our place;* his suffering being substituted for ours. This gift of the Son of God, to die for the ungodly, is the highest conceivable proof of his love.

(7) *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.* The greatness and freeness of the love of God is illustrated in this and the following verse, by making still more prominent the unworthiness of its objects. 'It is hardly to be expected that any one would die in the place of a merely righteous man, though for a good man this self-denial might possibly be exercised. But we, so far from being good, were not even righteous; we were sinners, ungodly, and enemies.' The difference between the words *righteous* and *good*, as here used, is that which, in common usage, is made between *just* and *kind*. The former is applied to a man who does all that the law or justice can demand of him, the latter to him who is governed by love. The just man commands respect; the good man calls forth affection. Respect being a cold and feeble principle, compared to love, the sacrifices to which it leads are comparatively slight.

(8) *But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* 'Commendeth,' i. e. renders conspicuous; see 3: 5. What renders the love of God so peculiarly conspicuous is his sending his Son to die, not for the good, nor even for the righteous, but for sinners, for those who were deserving of wrath instead of love. The word *sinners* expresses the idea of moral turpitude, and consequent exposure to the divine displeasure. It was *for* or *in the place of* those who were at once corrupt, and the enemies of God, that Christ died.

(9) *Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.* This and the following verse draw the obvious inference from the freeness and greatness of the love of God, as just exhibited, that believers shall be ultimately saved. It is an argument *à fortiori*. If the greater benefit has been bestowed, the less will not be withheld. If Christ has died for his enemies, he will surely save his friends. *Being justified.* To be justified is more than to be pardoned; it includes the idea of reconciliation or restoration to the favour of God, and the participation of the consequent blessings. This idea is prominently presented in the following verse. We are justified *by his blood.* This expression, as remarked above (ch. 4: 3), exhibits the true ground of our acceptance with God. It is not our works, nor our faith, nor our new obedience, nor the work of Christ in us, but what he has done for us; ch. 3: 25. Eph. 2: 13. Heb. 9: 12. Having by the death of Christ been brought into the relation of peace with God, being now

regarded for his sake as righteous, *we shall be saved from wrath through him.* He will not leave his work unfinished; whom he justifies them he also glorifies. The word *wrath*, of course, means the effects of wrath or punishment, those sufferings with which the divine displeasure visits sin; Matt. 3: 7. 1 Thess. 1: 10. Rom. 1: 18. Not only is our justification to be ascribed to Christ, but our salvation is *through* him. Salvation, in a general sense, includes justification, but when distinguished from it, as in this case, it means the consummation of that work of which justification is the commencement. It is a preservation from all the causes of destruction; a deliverance from the evils which surround us here, or threaten us hereafter; and an introduction into the blessedness of heaven. Christ thus saves us by his providence and Spirit, and by his constant intercession, ch. 8: 34. Heb. 4: 14, 15. 7: 25. Jude v. 24. 1 John 2: 1.

(10) *For if when we were yet enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son*, &c. This verse contains nearly the same idea as v. 9, presented in a different form. The word *enemies* is applied to men not only as descriptive of their moral character, but also of the relation in which they stand to God, as the objects of his displeasure. There is not only a wicked opposition of the sinner to God, but a holy opposition of God to the sinner. The preceding verse presents the former of these ideas, and this verse the latter most prominently. There it is said, though *sinners*, we are justified; and here, though *enemies*, we are reconciled. And this is the principal difference between the two verses. *To be reconciled to God*, in such connexions, does not mean to have our enmity to God removed, but his enmity to us taken out of the way; to have him rendered propitious, or his righteous justice satisfied. This is evident, 1. Because the reconciliation is ascribed to the death of Christ or his blood, v. 9. But, according to the constant representations of Scripture, the death of Christ is a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, or to propitiate the favour of God, and not immediately a means of sanctification. The former is its direct object: the latter an incidental result. This is the very idea of a sacrifice. 2. The object of the verse is to present us as enemies, or the objects of God's displeasure. 'If while we were the objects of the divine displeasure,' says the apostle, 'that displeasure has been removed, or God propitiated by the death of his Son, how much more shall we be saved,' &c. That is, if God has been reconciled to us, he will save us. 3. This is the proper meaning of the word, 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19. See also Matt. 5: 24, "First go and be reconciled to thy brother," i. e. go and appease his anger, or remove the ground of his displeasure; compare Heb. 2: 17, "He is a priest to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." It is the appropriate business of a priest to propitiate God, and not to reform men. See also 1 Sam. 29: 4, "Wherewith should he reconcile himself to his master? *should* it not *be* with the heads of these men?" Eph. 2: 16, "That he might reconcile both unto God by the cross," not remove their enmity to God, but secure for them

his favour and access to the Father, v. 18. 4. The context obviously requires this sense here. "Being reconciled by the death of his Son," evidently corresponds to the phrase "Being justified by his blood;" the latter cannot mean that our feelings towards God are changed, but is admitted to express the idea that we are forgiven and restored to the divine favour. Such, therefore, must be the meaning of the former. Besides, it is the object of the apostle to illustrate the greatness and freeness of the love of God from the unworthiness of its objects. While sinners, we are justified; while enemies, we are reconciled. To make the passage mean, that when enemies, we laid aside our enmity and became the friends of God, would be to make it contradict the very assertion and design of the apostle.

We shall be saved by his life. This rather unusual mode of expression was doubtless adopted for the sake of its correspondence to the words *by his death* in the preceding clause; and is a striking example of Paul's fondness for such antithetical constructions; see ch. 4: 25. Gal. 3: 3. 2 Cor. 3: 6. The meaning is obvious. 'If while we were enemies, we were restored to the favour of God by the death of his Son; the fact that he lives will certainly secure our final salvation.' 1. His life is a pledge and security for the life of all his people; see John 14: 19, "Because I live, ye shall live also;" Rom. 8: 11. 1 Cor. 15: 23. 2. He is able to save to the uttermost, "because he ever lives to make intercession for us;" Heb. 7: 25, &c. &c. 3. At his resurrection all power in heaven and earth was committed to his hands, Matt. 28: 18; and this power he exercises for the salvation of his people; Eph. 1: 22, 'He is head over all things for the benefit of his church;' Rev. 1: 18. Heb. 2: 9. 1 Cor. 15: 25, &c. &c.; see also the passages cited on the last clause of v. 9. There is, therefore most abundant ground for confidence for the final blessedness of believers, not only in the amazing love of God by which, though sinners and enemies, they have been justified and reconciled by the death of his Son, but also in the consideration that this same Saviour that died for them still lives, and ever lives to sanctify, protect, and save them.

(11) *Not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,* &c. That is, 'Not only are we secure of future salvation, but we now rejoice in God as our reconciled Father and portion.' This includes all other good. If God be for us, who can be against us? If we have the infinite fountain of blessedness, it matters little what streams may fail. *Through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Paul never forgets to acknowledge that all the blessings of redemption are through Jesus Christ; not only reconciliation and salvation, but present joyful intercourse with God, Heb. 4: 16.

By whom we have now received the atonement, or *reconciliation,* as the Greek word here used is always elsewhere rendered, Rom. 11: 15. 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19, and in which sense our translators probably used the word *atonement.* To receive reconciliation and to be reconciled, are, of

course, synonymous expressions. This clause, therefore, is but a repetition of verse 10, 'We rejoice in God through Jesus Christ, by whom, i. e. by whose death, we have been restored to the divine favour.' Paul says we have *now* received reconciliation; because reconciliation is a present good, and pledge of future blessedness. "If children, then heirs," Rom. 8: 17.

DOCTRINES.

1. Peace with God is the result of that system of religion alone, which, by providing at once for the satisfaction of divine justice and the sanctification of the human heart, is suited to the character of God and the nature of man. All history shows that no system other than the gospel has ever produced this peace, v. 1.

2. All the peculiar blessings of redemption are inseparably connected and grow out of each other. Those who are justified have peace with God, access to his presence, joy under the most adverse circumstances, assurance of God's love, and certainty of final salvation; see the whole section, and compare ch. 8: 30.

3. The Holy Ghost has intimate access to the human soul, controlling its exercises, exciting its emotions, and leading it into the knowledge of the truth, v. 5.

4. The assurance of hope is founded on the consciousness of pious affections, and the witness of the Holy Spirit; and is a grace to which believers may and ought to attain, vs. 4, 5.

5. The perseverance of the saints is to be attributed not to the strength of their love to God, nor to any thing else in themselves, but solely to the free and infinite love of God in Christ Jesus. The praise is, therefore, no more due to them, than commendation to a helpless infant for its mother's sleepless care. "Can a woman forget her sucking child," &c. vs. 6—10.

6. Redemption is not by truth or moral influence, but by blood, vs. 9, 10.

7. The primary object of the death of Christ was to render God propitious, to satisfy his justice; and not to influence human conduct, or display the divine character for the sake of the moral effect of that exhibition. Among its infinitely diversified results, all of which were designed, some of the most important, no doubt, are the sanctification of men, the display of the divine perfections, the prevention of sin, the happiness of the universe, &c. &c. But the object of a sacrifice, as such, is to propitiate, vs. 9, 10. Heb. 2: 17.

8. All we have or hope for, we owe to Jesus Christ; peace, communion with God, joy, hope, eternal life; see the whole section, and the whole Bible.

REMARKS.

1. If we are the genuine children of God, we have peace of conscience, a sense of God's favour, and freedom of access to his throne. We endure

afflictions with patience. Instead of making us distrustful of our heavenly Father, they afford us new proofs of his love, and strengthen our hope of his mercy. And we shall have also, more or less of the assurance of God's love by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, vs. 1—5.

2. None of these fruits of reconciliation with God can be obtained until the spirit of self-righteousness and self-dependence is removed. They are secured through faith, and by Christ Jesus, and not by our own works or merit, v. 1, &c.

3. The hope of the hypocrite is like a spider's web; the hope of the believer is an anchor to his soul, sure and steadfast, v. 5.

4. Assurance of the love of God never produces self-complacency or pride; but always humility, self-abasement, wonder, gratitude and praise. The believer sees that the mysterious fountain of this love is in the divine mind; it is not in himself who is ungodly and a sinner, vs. 8—10.

5. As the love of God in the gift of his Son, and the love of Christ in dying for us, are the peculiar characteristics of the gospel, no one can be a true Christian, on whom these truths do not exert a governing influence, vs. 9: 10; compare 2 Cor. 5: 14.

6. True religion is joyful, vs. 2, 11.

CHAP. 5: 12—21.

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13 (for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. 15 But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) 18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

ANALYSIS.

1. *Scope of the passage.* The design of this section is the illustration of the doctrine of the justification of sinners on the ground of the righteousness of Christ, by a reference to the condemnation of men for the sin of Adam. That such is its design, is evident, 1. From the context. Paul has been engaged from the beginning of the epistle in inculcating one main idea, viz. that the ground of the sinner's acceptance with God is not in himself, but the merit of Christ. And in the preceding verses he had said, "we are justified by his blood," v. 9; by his death we are restored to the divine favour, v. 10; and through him, i. e. by one man, we have received reconciliation, that is, are pardoned and justified, v. 11. As this idea of men's being regarded and treated not according to their own merit, but the merit of another, is contrary to the common mode of thinking among men, and, especially, contrary to their self-righteous efforts to obtain the divine favour, the apostle illustrates and enforces it by an appeal to the great analogous fact in the history of the world. 2. From an inspection of vs. 12, 18, 19, which contain the whole point and substance of the comparison. The verses 13—17 are virtually a parenthesis; and verses 20, 21, contain two remarks, merely incidental to the discussion. The verses 12, 18, 19, must, therefore, contain the main idea of the passage. In the 12th, only one side of the comparison is stated; but in vs. 18, 19, it is resumed and carried out. 'As by the offence of one all are condemned, so by the righteousness of one all are justified.' This, almost in the words of the apostle, is the simple meaning of vs. 18, 19, and makes the point of the comparison and scope of the passage peculiarly clear. 3. The design of the passage must be that on which all its parts bear, the point towards which they all converge. The course of the argument, as will appear in the sequel, bears so uniformly and lucidly on the point just stated, that the attempt to make it bear on any other involves the whole passage in confusion. All that the apostle says tends to the illustration of his declaration, 'as we are condemned on account of what Adam did, we are justified on account of what Christ did.' The illustration of this point, therefore, must be the design and scope of the whole.

2. *The connexion.* The design of the passage being the illustration of the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, previously established; the connexion is natural and obvious. 'WHEREFORE as by one man we have been brought under condemnation, so by one man we are brought into a state of justification and life.' The *wherefore* is consequently to be taken as illative, or marking an inference from the whole of the previous part of the epistle, and especially from the preceding verses. '*Wherefore* we are justified by the righteousness of one man; even as we were brought into condemnation by the sin of one man.'

3. *The course of the argument.* As the point to be illustrated is the justification of sinners on the ground of the righteousness of Christ, and the

source of illustration is the fall of all men in Adam, the passage begins with a statement of this latter truth. 'As on account of one man, death has passed on all men; so on account of one,' &c. v. 12.

Before, however, carrying out the comparison, the apostle stops to establish his position, that all men are regarded and treated as sinners on account of Adam. His proof is this. The infliction of a penalty implies the transgression of a law; since sin is not imputed where there is no law, v. 13.

All mankind are subject to death or penal evils; therefore all men are regarded as transgressors of a law, v. 13.

This law or covenant, which brings death on all men, is not the law of Moses, because multitudes died before that was given, v. 14.

Nor is it the law of nature written upon the heart, since multitudes die who have never violated even that law, v. 14.

Therefore, as neither of these laws is sufficiently extensive to embrace *all* the subjects of the penalty, we must conclude that men are subject to death on account of Adam; that is, it is for the offence of one that many die, vs. 13, 14.

Adam is, therefore, a type of Christ. As to this important point, there is a striking analogy between the fall and redemption. We are condemned in Adam, and we are justified in Christ. But the cases are not completely parallel. In the first place, the former dispensation is much more mysterious than the latter; for if by the offence of one many die, MUCH MORE by the righteousness of one shall many live, v. 15.

In the second place, the benefits of the one dispensation far exceed the evils of the other. For the condemnation was for one offence; the justification is from many. Christ saves us from much more than the guilt of Adam's sin, v. 16.

In the third place, Christ not only saves us from death, that is, not only frees us from the evils consequent on our own and Adam's sin, but introduces us into a state of positive and eternal blessedness, v. 17. Or this verse may be considered as an amplification of the sentiment of v. 15.

Having thus limited and illustrated the analogy between Adam and Christ, the apostle resumes and carries the comparison fully out. 'THEREFORE, as on account of one man all men are condemned; so on account of one all are justified, v. 18. For as through the disobedience of one many are regarded and treated as sinners; so through the righteousness of one many are regarded and treated as righteous,' v. 19. This, then, is the sense of the passage, men are condemned for the sin of one man, and justified for the righteousness of another.

If men are thus justified by the obedience of Christ, for what purpose is the law? It entered that sin might abound, i. e. that men might see how much it abounded; since by the law is the knowledge of sin. The law has its use, although men are not justified by their own obedience to it, v. 20.

As the law discloses, and even aggravates the dreadful triumphs of sin reigning, in union with death, over the human family, the gospel displays the far more effectual and extensive triumphs of grace through Jesus Christ our Lord, v. 21.

According to this view of the passage, it consists of five parts.

The first, contained in v. 12, presents the first member of the comparison between Christ and Adam.

The second contains the proof of the position assumed in the 12th verse, and embraces vs. 13, 14, which are therefore subordinate to v. 12. *Adam, therefore, is a type of Christ.*

The third, embracing vs. 15, 16, 17, is a commentary on this declaration, by which it is at once illustrated and limited.

The fourth, in vs. 18, 19, resumes and carries out the comparison commenced in v. 12.

The fifth forms the conclusion of the chapter, and contains a statement of the design and effect of the law, and of the results of the gospel suggested by the preceding comparison, vs. 20, 21.

COMMENTARY.

(12) *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin,* &c. The force of *wherefore* has already been pointed out, when speaking of the connexion of this passage with the preceding. 'It follows from what had been said of the method of justification, that as by one man,' &c. It indicates the point towards which the whole discussion, from the commencement of the epistle, tends, and the grand conclusion from all the apostle's reasoning. *As by one man.* The word *as* obviously indicates a comparison between the case of Adam and something else. Since, however, the other part of the comparison is not immediately stated, various explanations of this verse have been proposed. It is, however, so obvious, that the comparison here commenced is resumed and stated in full, in vs. 18, 19, that the great body of commentators consider the verses 13—17 as a parenthesis, designed for the confirmation and illustration of the statement in v. 12. Thus, too, the passage is pointed in our common English version.

By one man sin entered into the world, i. e. one man was the cause of all men's becoming sinners. To make these words mean nothing more than that sin commenced with Adam, that he was the first sinner, is obviously inconsistent with the force of the words BY ONE MAN, and with the whole context and design of the passage. See the expressions "through the offence of one," v. 15; "the judgment was by one," v. 16; "by one man's offence," v. 17; "by the offence of one judgment came," v. 18; "by one man's disobedience," v. 19. These expressions, so clearly parallel with the declaration "By one man sin entered into the world," make it too plain to admit of doubt that the clause before us expresses the idea that Adam was the cause of all men's becoming sinners, and not merely that sin began with him, or that he was the first sinner.

This is rendered, if possible, still more obvious by the constant contrast or comparison, through the whole passage, of Adam and Christ; *by* one man came sin; *by* one man came righteousness; *by* the offence of one came death; *by* the righteousness of the other came life; &c. &c. That Adam was the cause of sin and death is, therefore, as clearly expressed as that Christ is the cause of righteousness and life. The words *sin entered into the world* have been variously explained. 1. Many of the older and also of the more modern commentators understand *sin* here to mean *corruption*. This clause would then mean, 'By one man all men became corrupt.' 2. Others take the word *sin* in its ordinary sense, and understanding the passage as teaching either that Adam was the cause or occasion of all men committing sin, or that sin commenced with him; he was the first sinner. 3. Others again understand the declaration that through Adam sin entered into the world (i. e. that through him all men became sinners), to mean that on his account they were regarded and treated as sinners.

It will hardly be denied that this expression must be understood in the same way with the obviously parallel phrase, "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," in v. 19, and the corresponding ones in the other portions of the passage. It must also have the same meaning as the words "for all have sinned," at the close of this verse; and "sin was in the world," i. e. men were sinners, in v. 13. Which of the three interpretations, just stated, is to be preferred will, therefore, be most properly considered when we come to the last clause of the verse. It is probable that Paul meant to express, in the first instance, the general idea that all men fell in Adam; which includes the idea both of the loss of holiness, and of subjection to the penal consequences of sin. It will appear, however, in the sequel, that the latter is altogether the more prominent idea; and, consequently, that the third interpretation expresses most accurately the true meaning of the passage.

And death by sin, i. e. sin was the cause of death. The death here spoken of is not mere natural death, but the penalty of the law, or the evils threatened as the punishment of sin. This is evident, 1. From the consideration that it is said to be the consequence of sin. It must, therefore, mean that death which the Scriptures, elsewhere, speak of as the consequence and punishment of transgression. 2. Because this is the common and favourite term with the sacred writers, from first to last, for the penal consequences of sin. Gen. 2: 17, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," i. e. thou shalt become subject to the punishment due to sin; Ezek. 18: 4, "The soul that sinneth it shall die;" Rom. 6: 23, "The wages of sin is death;" ch. 8: 13, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." Such passages are altogether too numerous to be quoted, or even referred to; see, as further examples, Rom. 1: 32. 7: 5. James 1: 15. Rev. 20: 14, &c. &c. 3. From the constant opposition between the terms life and death throughout the Scriptures; the former standing for the rewards of the righteous, the latter for the

punishment of the wicked. Thus, in Gen. 2: 17, life was promised to our first parents as the reward of obedience; and death threatened as the punishment of disobedience. See Deut. 30: 15, "I have set before thee life and death;" Jer. 21: 8. Prov. 11: 19. Ps. 36: 9. Matt. 25: 46. John 3: 15. 2 Cor. 2: 16, &c. &c. 4. From the opposition in this passage between the life which is by Christ, and the death which is by Adam, vs. 15, 17, 21, 'Sin reigns unto death, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.' As, however, natural death is a part, and the most obvious part, of the penal evils of sin, it no doubt was prominent in the apostle's mind, as appears from vs. 13, 14. Death, therefore, in this passage, means the evil, and any evil which is inflicted in punishment of sin. The amount of this evil is different, no doubt, in every different case of transgression.

And so death passed on all men; that is, thus it is, or so it happened that death passed on all men. As death is the penalty of sin, and as by one man all became sinners, thus it was by one man that death passed on all men. The force of the words *and so* have indeed been much disputed. Many understand them as answering to the word *as* at the beginning of the verse, 'As Adam sinned and died, *so also* do all men.' But in the first place the words do not admit of this interpretation. Paul does not say *so also*, but *and so, thus it was.* Besides, according to this view of the passage this verse does not contain the first part of a comparison between Adam and Christ, but merely a comparison between Adam and his posterity. It is evident, however, from vs. 18, 19, that the comparison is between Adam and Christ. In this interpretation the force of the words *by one man* is entirely overlooked. It is *by one man* that men became sinners; and thus it was *by one man* that death passed upon all men.

For that all have sinned. These words obviously assign the reason why all men are exposed to death. Instead of rendering the Greek words ἐφ' ᾧ *for that*, the Latin version, and many of the older commentators and theologians, Arminians as well as Calvinists, translate them *in whom.* 'By one man all men became sinners, and hence death passed upon all men, *through that one man*, in whom all sinned.' This, no doubt, is the true meaning of the whole verse. But it is not necessary, in order to defend this interpretation, to adopt the rendering *in whom*, against which there are strong philological objections; especially the remoteness of the antecedent. Our common version, therefore, is to be preferred. 'All die for that, or because that, all have sinned.'

With regard to these important words, we meet with the three interpretations mentioned at the beginning of this verse. All men have personally and actually sinned. Then the sentiment of the verse is either, 'As Adam sinned and died, so in like manner death has passed on all men, because all have sinned.' According to this view, the connexion of Adam's sin with the sin and death of his posterity is not stated, though it may be intimated by the peculiar form of the expressions. Or the

meaning is, 'As Adam was the cause or occasion of men becoming sinners, so death passed on all, since all have, in consequence of his obedience, been led into sin.' The objections to this interpretation will be presented in the sequel, in the form of arguments in favour of another view of the passage. According to the second interpretation, the words mean *all have become corrupt*. Then the sense of the verse is, 'As by Adam, sin (corruption of nature) was introduced into the world, and death as its consequence, and so death passed on all men, because all have become corrupt; even so,' &c. The principal objections to this interpretation are, 1. It assigns a very unusual, if not an unexampled sense to the words. The word rendered *have become corrupt*, not occurring elsewhere with this signification. 2. It destroys the analogy between Christ and Adam. The point of the comparison is not, 'As Adam was the source of corruption, so is Christ of holiness;' but, 'As Adam was the cause of our condemnation, so is Christ of our justification.' 3. It is inconsistent with the meaning of vs. 13, 14, which are designed to prove that the ground of the universality of death is the sin or offence of Adam. 4. It would require us, in order to preserve any consistency in the passage, to put an interpretation on vs. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, which they will not bear. Although the sentiment, therefore, is correct and scriptural, that we derive a corrupt nature from Adam, as it is also true that Christ is the author of holiness, yet these are not the truths which Paul is here immediately desirous of presenting.

The third interpretation, therefore, according to which the words in question mean *all men are regarded and treated as sinners*, is to be preferred. The verse then contains this idea, 'As by one man all men became sinners and exposed to death, and thus death passed on all men, since all sinned, i. e. are regarded as sinners on his account,' *even so* by one man, &c. The arguments in support of this interpretation are the following, 1. The word translated *have sinned* may in strict accordance with usage be rendered *have become guilty*, or, *regarded and treated as sinners*. Compare Gen. 44: 32, "I shall bear the blame;" literally, 'I shall have sinned;' see also Gen. 43: 9. 1 Kings 1: 21. 2. It is almost uniformly admitted that v. 12 contains the first member of a comparison between Adam and Christ, which is resumed and carried out in vs. 18, 19. In these verses, however, the idea is clearly expressed 'that judgment came on all men on account of the offence of one man.' If these verses express the same idea with v. 12, we are forced to understand this verse as teaching not the acknowledged truth that all men are sinners, but that all are treated as sinners on account of one man. 3. This interpretation is demanded by the connexion between v. 12, and vs. 13, 14. These latter verses beginning with *for* are evidently designed to prove the assertion contained in v. 12. All men are regarded as sinners on account of the offence of one man, is the assertion of v. 12, *for* there is no other way of accounting for the universality of penal evils, is the reason assigned in vs. 13, 14. 4. What v. 12 is thus made to assert, and vs. 13,

14, to prove, is assumed as proved in vs. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. 5. This interpretation is required by the scope of the passage and the drift of the apostle's argument. The scope of the passage is to illustrate the doctrine of justification on the ground of the righteousness of Christ, by a reference to the condemnation of men for the sin of Adam. The analogy is destroyed, and the point of the comparison fails, if any thing in us be assumed as the ground of the infliction of the penal evils of which the apostle is here speaking. That we have corrupt natures and are personally sinners, and therefore liable to other and further inflictions is indeed true, but nothing to the point. Not only does the scope of the passage demand this interpretation, but also the whole course of the argument. We die on account of Adam's sin, v. 12; this is true, because on no other ground can the universality of *death* be accounted for, vs. 13, 14. But if we all die on Adam's account, how much more shall we live on account of Christ, v. 15. Adam indeed brings upon us the evil inflicted for the first great violation of the covenant, but Christ saves us from all our numberless sins, v. 16. As therefore, for the offence of one, we are condemned, so for the righteousness of one we are justified, v. 18. As on account of the disobedience of one we are treated as sinners, so on account of the obedience of one we are treated as righteous, v. 19. 6. The doctrine which the verse thus explained teaches, is one of the plainest truths of all the scriptures and of experience. Is it not a revealed fact, above all contradiction, and sustained by the whole history of the world, that the sin of Adam altered the relation in which our race stood to God? Did not that sin of itself, and independently of any thing in us, or done by us, bring evil on the world? In other words, did we not fall when Adam fell? If these questions are answered in the affirmative, the doctrine contained in the interpretation of v. 12, given above, is admitted. 7. The doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin, or, that on account of that sin, all men are regarded and treated as sinners, was a common Jewish doctrine at the time of the apostle, as well as at a later period. He employs the same mode of expression on the subject which the Jews were accustomed to use. They could not have failed, therefore, to understand him as meaning to convey by these expressions the ideas usually connected with them.

(13, 14) *For until the law sin was in the world*, &c. These verses are connected by *for* with v. 12, as introducing the proof of the declaration that death had passed on all men on account of one man. The proof is this: the infliction of penal evils implies the violation of law; the violation of the law of Moses will not account for the universality of death, because men died before that law was given. Neither is the violation of the law of nature sufficient to explain the fact that all men are subject to death, because even those die who have never broken that law. As, therefore, death supposes transgression, and neither the law of Moses nor the law of nature embraces all the victims of death, it follows that

men are subject to penal evils on account of the sin of Adam. It is for the offence of one that many die.

In order to the proper understanding of the apostle's argument, it should be borne in mind that the term *death* stands for penal evil; not for this or that particular form of it, but for any and every evil judicially inflicted for the support of law. Paul's reasoning does not rest upon the mere fact that all men, even infants, are subject to natural death; for this might be accounted for by the violation of the law of Moses, or of the law of nature, or by their inherent native depravity. This covers the whole ground, and may account for the universality of natural death. But no one of these causes, nor all combined, can account for the infliction of all the penal evils to which men are subjected. The great fact in the apostle's mind was, that God regards and treats all men, from the first moment of their existence, as out of fellowship with himself, as having forfeited his favour. Instead of entering into communion with them the moment they begin to exist (as he did with Adam), and forming them by his Spirit in his own moral image, he regards them as out of his favour, and withholds the influences of the Spirit. Why is this? Why does God thus deal with the human race? The fact that he does thus deal with them is not denied by any except Pelagians. Why then is it? Here is a form of death which the violation of the law of Moses, the transgression of the law of nature, the existence of innate depravity, separately or combined, are insufficient to account for. Its infliction is antecedent to them all; and yet it is of all evils the essence and the sum. Men begin to exist out of communion with God. This is the fact which no sophistry can get out of the Bible or the history of the world. Paul tells us why it is. It is because we fell in Adam; it is for the one offence of ONE MAN that all thus die. The covenant being formed with Adam, not only for himself, but also for his posterity (in other words, Adam having been placed on trial not for himself only, but also for his race), his act was, in virtue of this relation, regarded as our act; God withdrew from us as he did from him; in consequence of this withdrawal we begin to exist in moral darkness, destitute of a disposition to delight in God, and prone to delight in ourselves and the world. The sin of Adam, therefore, ruined us; it was the ground of the withdrawing of the divine favour from the whole race; and the intervention of the Son of God for our salvation is an act of pure, sovereign, and wonderful grace.

Whatever obscurity, therefore, rests upon this passage, arises from taking the word *death* in the narrow sense in which it is commonly used among men; if taken in its scriptural sense, the whole argument is plain and conclusive. Let *penal evil* be substituted for the word *death*, and the argument will stand thus, 'All men are subject to penal evils on account of one man; this is the position to be proved (v. 12). That such is the case is evident, because the infliction of a penalty supposes the violation of law. But such evil was inflicted before the giving of the Mosaic law, it comes on men before the transgression of the law of nature, or

even the existence of inherent depravity; it must, therefore, be for the offence of one man that judgment has come upon all men to condemnation.' The wide sense in which the sacred writers use the word death accounts for the fact that the dissolution of the body (which is one form of the manifestation of the divine displeasure) is not only included in it, but is often the prominent idea.

Until the law. That the law of Moses is here intended is plain from v. 14, where the period marked by the words *until the law* is described by saying *from Adam to Moses.*

Sin was in the world, that is, men were regarded as sinners. These words must have the same meaning as *all have sinned* in the preceding verse. They neither mean that men were corrupt, nor that they were actual sinners, but that they were treated as sinners. This is obvious from the next clause, 'Before the time of Moses men were treated as sinners, but they are not so treated where there is no law.' *Sin is not imputed where there is no law.* That is, sin is not laid to one's account and punished; see ch. 4 : 8, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin;" see remarks on ch. 4 : 3, and the frequently recurring equivalent expressions, "His iniquity shall be upon him," as in Num. 15 : 31; "He shall bear his iniquity," Lev. 5 : 1. The principle here advanced, and on which the apostle's argument rests, is that the infliction of penal evils implies the violation of law. The only question then is, what law have *all* mankind violated so as to become subject to death? The answer follows in the next verse.

(14) *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses.* That is, men were subject to death before the law of Moses was given, and consequently not on account of violating it. There must be some other ground, therefore, of their exposure to death.

Even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. That is, who had not sinned as Adam did. The question is, what is the point of dissimilarity to which the apostle here refers? Some say it is that Adam violated a positive command to which the sanction of death was expressly added, and that those referred to did not. The principal objections to this interpretation are, 1. That it destroys the distinction between the two classes of persons here alluded to. It makes Paul, in effect, reason thus, 'Death reigned over those who had not violated any positive law, even over those who had not violated any positive law.' It is obvious that the first clause of the verse describes a general class, and the second clause, which is distinguished from the first by the word *even*, only a portion of that class. All men who died from Adam to Moses died without violating a positive command. The class, therefore, which is distinguished from them, must be contrasted with Adam on some other ground than that which is common to the whole. 2. This interpretation is inconsistent with the context, because it involves us in inextricable difficulties in the interpretation of vs. 13, 14. We must suppose that these verses are designed to prove that all men

are sinners, which is altogether at variance with the context, with the meaning of v. 12, with the scope of the passage and drift of the argument. Or we must adopt the interpretation of those who confine the word *death* to mean the dissolution of the body, and who make the apostle argue that men do not incur this particular evil for their own sins, but for the sin of Adam. Or we are driven to some other unsatisfactory view of the passage. In short, these verses, when the clause in question is thus explained, present insuperable difficulties.

Others understand the difference between Adam and those intended to be described in this clause, to be, that Adam sinned personally and actually, the others not. In favour of this view it may be argued, 1. That the words evidently admit of this interpretation as naturally as of the other. Paul simply says the persons referred to did not sin as Adam did. Whether he means that they did not sin at all, that they were not sinners in the ordinary sense of that term; or that they had not sinned against the same kind of law, depends on the context, and is not determined by the mere form of expression. 2. If v. 12 teaches that men are subject to death on account of the sin of Adam, if this is the doctrine of the whole passage, and if, as is admitted, vs. 13, 14 are designed to prove the assertion of v. 12, then is it necessary that the apostle should show that death comes on those who have no personal and actual sins to answer for. This he does. 'Death reigns not only over those who have never broken any positive law, but even over those who have never sinned as Adam did; that is, who have never in their own persons violated any law, by which their exposure to death can be accounted for.' All the arguments, therefore, which go to establish the interpretation given above of v. 12, or the correctness of the exhibition of the course of the apostle's argument, and design of the whole passage, bear with all their force in support of the view here given of this clause. Almost all the objections to this interpretation, being founded on misapprehension, are answered by the mere statement of the case. The simple doctrine and argument of the apostle is, that THERE ARE PENAL EVILS WHICH COME UPON MEN ANTECEDENTLY TO ANY TRANSGRESSIONS OF THEIR OWN, AND AS THE INFLICTION OF THESE EVILS IMPLIES A VIOLATION OF LAW, IT FOLLOWS THAT THEY ARE REGARDED AND TREATED AS SINNERS ON THE GROUND OF THE DISOBEDIENCE OF ANOTHER. In other words, that it was by the offence of one man that judgment came on all men to condemnation. It is of course not implied in this statement or argument that men are not now, or were not from Adam to Moses, punishable for their own sins, but simply that they are subject to penal evils which cannot be accounted for on the ground of their personal transgressions. This statement, which contains the whole doctrine of imputation, is so obviously contained in the argument of the apostle, and stands out so conspicuously in the Bible, and is so fully established by the history of the world, that it is frequently and freely admitted by the great majority of commentators.

Who was a figure of him that was to come. The word translated *figure* means properly *a print*, or impression of any thing, John 20 : 25, where it is used of the print of the nails; then more generally an image, model, likeness, type. The simple meaning, is that Adam was like Christ. *Him that was to come*, i. e. the Messiah, who is called the second Adam, 1 Cor. 15 : 45; and from the fact that he had been long expected, "He that was to come," Matt. 11 : 3. The point of resemblance between Adam and Christ is to be gathered from the context. It is this: each stood as the head and representative of all connected with them. By the offence of the one all connected with him are subject to death; and by the righteousness of the other all connected with him are justified and saved.

As Paul commenced this section with the design of instituting this comparison between Christ and Adam, and interrupted himself to prove, in vs. 13, 14, that Adam was really the representative of his race, or that all men are subject to death for his offence; and having, at the close of v. 14, announced the fact of this resemblance, by calling Adam a type of Christ, he again stops to limit and explain this declaration, by pointing out the real nature of the analogy. This he does principally by showing, in verses 15, 16, 17, the particulars in which the comparison does not hold. And in vs. 18, 19, which are a resumption of the sentiment of v. 12, he states the grand point of their agreement.

(15) *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift.* The cases, although parallel, are not precisely alike. In the first place, it is far more consistent with our views of the character of God that many should be benefited by the merit of one man, than that they should suffer for the sin of one. If the latter has happened, MUCH MORE may we expect the former to occur. The attentive reader of this passage will perceive constantly increasing evidence that the design of the apostle is, not to show that the blessings procured by Christ are greater than the evils caused by Adam; but to illustrate and confirm the prominent doctrine of the epistle, that we are justified on the ground of the righteousness of Christ. This is obvious from the sentiment of this verse, 'If we die for the sin of Adam, *much more* may we live through the righteousness of Christ.'

The expression *but not as the offence, so also is the free gift*, is singularly concise and by itself obscure. But viewed in the light of the context, it is sufficiently plain. The *offence* includes not only the idea of the sin, but of the punishment of Adam; and the *free gift* is not only the righteousness of Christ, considered as a gracious gift of God, but also its reward. The former, therefore, is equivalent to the word *fall*; and the latter to its opposite, *gracious restoration*. The context shows this to be the full meaning of the words. As, however, the *sin* is the most prominent idea in the one phrase, and the *righteousness* in the other, these alone seem to be intended in the next clause, their consequences being left out of view.

For if through the offence of one many be dead, that is, if on account

of the offence of the one many die. The dative, which is the case in which the word for *offence* here occurs, is used very frequently to express the ground or reason of a thing. Rom. 11: 20, "Because of unbelief they were broken off," &c. *Many*, or rather *the many*, evidently means the multitude, the mass, the whole race; as the words *many* and *all* are interchangeably used throughout the passage.

It is here, therefore, expressly asserted that the sin of Adam was the cause of all his posterity's being subjected to death, that is, to penal evil. But it may still be asked whether it was the occasional or the immediate cause. That is, whether the apostle means to say that the sin of Adam was the occasion of all men being placed in such circumstances that they all sin, and thus incur death; or that, by being the cause of the corruption of their nature, it is thus indirectly the cause of their condemnation; or whether he is to be understood as saying that his sin is the direct judicial ground or reason for the infliction of penal evil? Does the dative here express the occasional cause, or the ground or reason of the result attributed to the offence of one man? 1. That such *may* be the force and meaning of the words, as they here stand, no one can pretend to doubt. That is, no one can deny that the dative case can express the ground or reason as well as the occasion of a thing. 2. This interpretation is not only possible, and in strict accordance with the meaning of the words, but it is here demanded by the context; because the sentiment expressed by these words is confessedly the same as that taught in those which follow; and they, as will appear in the sequel, will not bear the opposite interpretation. 3. It is demanded by the whole design and drift of the passage. The very point of the comparison is, that as the righteousness of Christ, and not our own works, is the ground of our justification; so the sin of Adam, antecedently to any sins of our own, is the ground of the infliction of certain penal evils. If the latter be denied, the very point of the analogy between Christ and Adam is destroyed.

Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, hath abounded unto many. Had Paul been studious of uniformity in the structure of his sentences, this clause would have been differently worded. 'If by the offence of one many die, much more by the free gift of one shall many live.' The meaning is the same. The force of the passage lies in the words *much more.* The idea is not that the grace is more abundant and efficacious than the offence and its consequences, which idea is expressed in v. 20, but if the one dispensation has occurred, much more may the other; if we die for one, much more may we live by another. The first clause of the verse may be thus interpreted, 'the grace of God, *even* the gift by grace;' so that the latter phrase is explanatory of the former. If they are to be distinguished, the first refers to the cause, viz. the grace of God; and the second to the result, viz. the gift by grace, i. e. the gracious or free gift. *Which is by one man, Jesus Christ;* that is, which comes to us through Christ. This free gift is of course the opposite of what comes upon us for the sake of Adam. Guilt and con

demnation come from him; righteousness and consequent acceptance from Jesus Christ. What is here called the free gift is, in v. 17, called the gift of righteousness. *Hath abounded unto many*; that is, has been freely and abundantly bestowed on many. Whether the many in this clause is coextensive numerically with the many in the other, will be considered under v. 18.

(16) *And not as* it was *by one that sinned*, so is *gift*, &c. This clause, as it stands in the original, *and not as by one that sinned, the gift*, is obviously elliptical. Some word corresponding to *gift* is to be supplied in the first member. Either *offence*, which is opposed to the *free gift* in the preceding verse; or *judgment*, which occurs in the next clause. The sense then is, 'The gift (of justification, see v. 17) was not like the sentence which came by one that sinned.' The point of this verse is, that the sentence of condemnation which passed on all men* for the sake of Adam, was for *one* offence, whereas we are justified by Christ from *many* offences. Christ does much more than remove the guilt and evils consequent on the sin of Adam. This is the second particular in which the work of Christ differs from that of Adam.

For the judgment was *by one to condemnation*. *By one* does not here mean *by one man*, but *by one offence*, as is obvious from its opposition to the phrase *many offences* in the same clause. "A judgment to condemnation" is an Hebraic or Hellenistic idiom for a condemnatory judgment, or sentence of condemnation. The word rendered *judgment* properly means the decision or sentence of a judge, and is here to be taken in its usual and obvious signification.

It is then plainly stated in this clause that 'the sentence of condemnation passed on all men for the one offence of Adam.' This interpretation of the clause is obviously the correct one. 1. Because it is the simple and proper meaning of the words. To say that *a sentence is for an offence*, is to say that the sentence is on account of the offence, and not that the offence is the cause of something else which is the ground of the sentence. The preposition rendered *by* expresses properly the origin of one thing from another; and is therefore used to indicate almost any relation in which a cause may stand to an effect. The logical character of this relation depends, of course, on the nature of the subject spoken of. In all such cases as Gal. 2 : 16, "A man is not justified *by* works;" Rom. 9 : 11, the purpose of election "is not *of* works;" Tit. 3 : 5, we are saved "not *by* works of righteousness," and in a multitude of similar examples, it indicates the rational cause, or reason, as it does here. We are not elected, justified, or saved on account of our works. When Paul, therefore, says we are condemned *by* or *for* the offence of one, and that we are justified *by* or *for* the righteousness of another, the meaning obviously is, that it is *on account of* the offence we are condemned, and

* The words *all men* are expressed in v. 18, where this clause is repeated. "By the offence of one judgment came on all men to condemnation."

on account of the righteousness we are justified. The expression "the sentence was by one offence" teaches as clearly the mode of condemnation, as the mode of justification is taught by saying "it is not by works," but "by the righteousness of Christ." 2. This interpretation is not only the simple and natural meaning of the words, but is rendered necessary by the context. We have in this verse the idea of pardon on the one hand, and condemnation on the other. If the latter clause means, as is admitted, that we are pardoned for many offences, the former must mean we are condemned for one. 3. The whole force of the contrast lies in this very idea. The antithesis in this verse is between the *one offence* and the *many offences*. To make Paul say that the offence of Adam was the means of involving us in a multitude of crimes, from all of which Christ saves us, is to make the evil and the benefit exactly equal. 'Adam leads us into offences from which Christ delivers us.' Here is no contrast and no superiority. Paul, however, evidently means to assert that the evil, from which Christ saves us, is far greater than that which Adam has brought upon us. According to the natural interpretation of the verse this idea is retained; 'Adam brought upon us the condemnation of *one* offence; Christ saves us from that of *many*.' 4. Add to these considerations the obvious meaning of the corresponding clauses in the other verses, especially in v. 19, and the design of the apostle so often referred to, and it seems scarcely possible to resist the evidence in favour of this view of the passage.*

The free gift is *of many offences unto justification*, that is, the free gift is justification. The construction of this clause is the same as that of the preceding one, and is to be explained in the same way. As, however, the logical relation of a sentence to an offence is not the same as that of pardon to transgressions, the preposition (ἐκ) cannot express precisely the same idea here as in the foregoing clause. Though it is proper to say we are condemned *on account of* our offences, we cannot say we are pardoned or justified *on account of* them in precisely the same sense. Our translators render the word, therefore, in the first instance *by*, and in the second *of*. The sentiment of the verse then is, 'While, on account of Adam, we suffer the sentence of condemnation pronounced on one sin, we are freed through Christ from the condemnation of many.'

(17) *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more*, &c. It is doubtful whether this verse is a mere amplification of the idea of v. 15, which, in import and structure, it so much resembles; or whether the stress is to be laid on the last clause, *reigning in life;* so that the point of the difference between Adam and Christ, as here indicated, is, Christ not only delivers from death, but bestows eternal life; or, finally, whether the emphasis is to be laid on the word *receive*. The

* This interpretation is given not only by the older and stricter Calvinistics, but by Arminians, Pelagians, Rationalists, and the great body of philological commentators.

idea would then be, 'if we are thus subject to death for an offence in which we had no personal concern, how much more shall we be saved by a righteousness which we voluntarily embrace.' The decision of these questions is not at all material to the general interpretation of the passage. Both of the ideas contained in the latter two views of the verse are probably to be included.

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one. That is, if on account of the offence of one man many are subject to death. This clause is a repetition, in nearly the same words, of the second clause of v. 15, *if through the offence of one many be dead*, and is to be explained in the same way. The dative has the same force here which it has there. See the remarks on that verse.

Much more *they which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.* The phrase *abundance of grace* is explained by the following one, *gift of righteousness;* 'grace, *even* the gift of righteousness;' which is the gift or favour of which the apostle is speaking throughout the whole passage. That righteousness here does not mean holiness, is evident from the constant use of the word by Paul in a different sense in this epistle; from the fact that it is pardon, justification, justifying righteousness, not sanctification, that Paul in the context represents as the blessing received from Christ; and because it is in this verse opposed to the reigning of death, or state of condemnation, on account of the offence of Adam. *They which receive the abundant grace* expresses much more than the mere offer of pardon. It cannot be said of all who live under a dispensation of grace that they shall reign in life through Jesus Christ. This clause evidently is descriptive of those who voluntarily embrace the offered blessing. *The gift of righteousness* is something more than pardoning grace. It is that which is expressed in v. 15 by the *free gift;* and in v. 16 by *the free gift unto justification.* It is, therefore, the gift of justification; or, what is but another method of stating the same idea, it is the righteousness of Christ by which we are justified, since the gift of justification includes the gift of Christ's righteousness. The meaning of the verse consequently is, 'If on account of the offence of one man we are condemned, much more shall those who receive the righteousness graciously offered to them in the gospel, not only be delivered from condemnation, but also reign in life by one, Jesus Christ;' that is, be gloriously exalted in the participation of that life of holiness and communion with God which is the end of our being, and of which Christ alone is the author.

By one, Jesus Christ. As it was by one man, antecedently to any concurrence of our own, that we were brought into a state of condemnation, so it is by one man, without any merit of our own, that we are delivered from this state. If the one event has happened, much more may we expect the other to occur. If we are thus involved in the condemnation of a sin in which we had no personal concern, much more shall we, who

voluntarily receive the gift of righteousness, be not only saved from the consequences of the fall, but be made partakers of eternal life.

(18) *Therefore, as by the offence of one* judgment came *on all men to condemnation; even so*, &c. The words rendered *therefore* mark the resumption of the comparison commenced in v. 12. The carrying out of this comparison was interrupted, in the first place, to prove, in vs. 13, 14, the position assumed in v. 12, that all men are subject to death on account of the sin of Adam; and, in the second place, to limit and explain the analogy asserted to exist between Christ and Adam, at the close of v. 14. This is done in vs. 15, 16, 17. Having thus fortified and explained his meaning, the apostle now states the case in full. The word *therefore*, at the beginning of v. 12, marks an inference from the whole doctrine of the epistle; the corresponding words here are also strictly inferential. It had been proved that we are justified by the righteousness of one man, and it has also been proved that we are under condemnation for the offence of one. *Therefore*, as we are condemned, even so are we justified.

It will be remarked, from the manner in which they are printed, that the words *judgment came*, in the first clause of this verse, and the *free gift came*, in the second, have nothing to answer to them in the original. That they are correctly and necessarily supplied, is obvious from a reference to v. 16, where these elliptical phrases occur in full.

The construction in these clauses, *the judgment was to condemnation*, and *the free gift was unto justification of life*, is the same as that in the second clause of v. 16, and is to be explained in the same manner. 'The sentence was condemnation,' i. e. condemnatory. This came upon all men by the offence of one; that is, on that account they were condemned. 'The free gift was justification of life.' This also comes on all by the righteousness of one; that is, on this ground they are justified. The expression *justification of life* means that justification which is connected with eternal life, or of which that life is the consequence.

There are two important questions yet to be considered in reference to this verse. The first is, What is the force of the phrase *by the offence of one* judgment came *on all men to condemnation?* There is no dispute as to the meaning of the expression "judgment came on all to condemnation;" it is admitted to mean, what alone it can mean, that all are condemned; see above on v. 16. But the question is, What is the relation between the offence of Adam and the condemnation of men? Or what is the force of the words *by the offence of one?* According to the common, and, as it is believed, the only correct view of the passage, these words state that the offence of Adam was the ground of the condemnation of men, and not merely the occasion of it. The preposition which is rendered *by* (διά) is not the same as that which is so translated in v. 16. It is readily admitted that this preposition has, with the genitive, the meaning *by means of*, and with the accusative, *on account of*. With the former case it expresses the means by which any thing is done, and,

with the latter, the ground or reason for which it is done. As the genitive is used here and in the following verse, it may be argued that Paul does not mean to say that the offence of Adam was the ground of our condemnation, but that it was the occasion of it merely; or, in general terms, the cause of it, without indicating the nature of that cause. While it is admitted that the preposition in question, with the genitive, properly indicates the *means* to an end, yet, from the nature of the case, that *means* may be the ground or reason on which any thing is done. Thus, in v. 12 of this chapter, Paul says "death was *by* sin," i. e. sin was the means or cause of death, yet it was such by being the ground or reason of its infliction. The sense, therefore, is accurately expressed by saying 'death was on account of sin.' In ch. 3: 24 we are said to be justified "through the redemption" of Christ, i. e. *by means* of it; yet here the means is of the nature of the ground or reason of our justification. The same remark may be made in reference to the frequent phrases "through his blood," Eph. 1: 7. Col. 1: 14, &c.; "through his death," Rom. 5: 10. Col. 1: 22; "by the cross," Eph. 2: 16, &c.; "by the sacrifice of himself," Heb. 9: 26; "through the offering of the body of Jesus," Heb. 10: 10; in all these, and a multitude of similar cases, the preposition in question retains its appropriate force with the genitive, as indicating the means, and yet in all of them the means is the ground or reason. Thus also, in this immediate connexion, we have the expressions "*by* the righteousness of one" all are justified; and "*by* the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." We have, therefore, in this single passage no less than three cases, vs. 12, 18, 19, in which this preposition with the genitive indicates such a means to an end, as the ground or reason on account of which something is given or performed. All this is surely sufficient to prove that it *may*, in the case before us, express the ground why the sentence of condemnation has passed on all men. That such, in this connexion, must be its meaning, appears, 1. From the nature of the subject spoken of. To say that one man has been corrupted by another, may indeed express very generally that one was the cause of the corruption of the other, without giving any information as to the mode in which the result was secured. But to say that a man was justified by means of a good action, or that he was condemned by means of a bad one; or, plainer still, in Paul's own language, that a condemnatory sentence came upon him by means of that action; according to all common rules of interpretation, naturally means that such action was the reason of the sentence. 2. From the antithesis. If the phrase "by the righteousness of one all are justified" means, as is admitted, that that righteousness is the ground of our justification; the opposite clause, "by the offence of one all are condemned," must have a similar meaning. 3. The point of the comparison, as frequently remarked before, lies in this very idea. The fact that Adam's sin was the occasion of our sinning, and thus incurring the divine displeasure, is no illustration of the fact that Christ's righteousness, and not our own

merit, is the ground of our acceptance. There would be some plausibility in this interpretation, if it were the doctrine of the gospel that Christ's righteousness is the occasion of our becoming holy, and that on the ground of this personal holiness we are justified. But this not being the case, the interpretation in question cannot be adopted in consistency with the design of the apostle, or the common rules of exposition. 4. This clause is nearly identical with the corresponding one of v. 16, "the judgment was by one (offence) to condemnation." But that clause, as shown above, is made, almost by common consent, to mean that the offence was the ground of the condemnatory sentence. Such, therefore, must be the meaning of the apostle in this verse; compare also vs. 15, 17, 19.

The second question of importance respecting this verse is, whether the *all men* of the second clause is coextensive with the *all men* of the first. Are the *all* who are justified for the righteousness of Christ, the *all* who are condemned for the sin of Adam? In regard to this point it may be remarked, in the first place, that no inference can be fairly drawn in favour of an affirmative answer to this question, from the mere universality of the expression. Nothing is more familiar to the readers of the Scriptures than that such universal terms are to be limited by the nature of the subject or the context. Thus, John 3: 26, it is said of Christ, "all men come to him;" John 12: 32, Christ says, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Thus the expressions "all the world should be taxed," "all Judea," "all Jerusalem," must, from the nature of the case, be limited. In a multitude of cases the words *all*, *all things*, mean the all spoken of in the context, and not all without exception; see Eph. 1: 10. Col. 1: 20. 1 Cor. 15: 22, 51, &c. &c. 2. This limitation is always implied when the Scriptures elsewhere speak of a necessary condition connected with the blessing to which all are said to attain. It is everywhere taught that faith is necessary to justification; and, therefore, when it is said "all are justified," it must mean all believers. "By him," says this apostle, "*all that believe* are justified from all things," &c. Acts 13: 39. 3. As if to prevent the possibility of mistake, Paul, in v. 17, says it is those who "receive the gift of righteousness" that reign in life. 4. Even the *all men*, in the first clause, must be limited to those descended from Adam "by ordinary generation." It is not absolutely all. The man Christ Jesus must be excepted. The plain meaning is, all connected with Adam, and all connected with Christ. 5. A reference to the similar passage in 1 Cor. 15: 22, confirms this interpretation, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;" that is, shall be made partakers of a glorious resurrection and of eternal life. Thus the original word and the context require the latter clause of that verse to be understood. The *all* there intended are immediately called "they that are Christ's," v. 23, i. e. all connected with him, and not numerically the *all* that die in Adam. 6. This interpretation is necessary because it is impossible, with any

regard to scriptural usage or truth, to carry the opposite interpretation through. In this whole passage there are two classes of persons spoken of, those connected with Adam and those connected with Christ. Of the former it is said, "they die," v. 15; "they are condemned," vs. 16, 18; "they are made sinners," v. 19, by the offence of one man. Of the latter it is said, that to them "the grace of God and the gift by grace hath abounded," v. 15; "that they are freely justified from many offences," vs. 16, 18; "that they shall reign in life through Christ Jesus," v. 17; "that they are regarded and treated as righteous," v. 19. If these things can be said of all men, of impenitent sinners and hardened reprobates, what remains to be said of the people of God? It is not possible so to eviscerate these declarations as to make them contain nothing more than that the chance of salvation is offered to all men. To say that a man is justified, is not to say that he has the opportunity of justifying himself; and to say that a man shall reign in life, is not to say he may possibly be saved. Who ever announces to a congregation of sinners that they are all justified—they are all constituted righteous—they all have the justification of life? The interpretation which requires all these strong and plain declarations to be explained in a sense which they confessedly have nowhere else in the Bible, and which makes them mean hardly any thing at all, is at variance with every sound principle of construction. It is not within the bounds of possibility that "the many (i. e. all) shall be constituted righteous;" that is, "justified, pardoned, accepted and treated as righteous," means nothing more than that acceptance is proffered to all men. Paul's doctrine, therefore, is, 'As on account of the offence of Adam, all connected with him are condemned; so on account of the righteousness of Christ, all connected with him have the justification of life.'

(19) *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* This verse presents the doctrine of the preceding one in a somewhat different form. As in the doctrine of justification, there are the two ideas of the ascription of righteousness, and treating as righteous; and in the doctrine of the fall, the ascription of guilt (legal responsibility), and the treating all men as guilty; so either of these ideas is frequently presented more prominently than the other. In v. 18 it is the latter, in each case, which is made most conspicuous, and in v. 19 the former. In v. 18 it is our being *treated* as sinners for the sin of Adam, and our being *treated* as righteous for the righteousness of Christ, that is most prominently presented. In v. 19, on the contrary, it is our being *regarded* as sinners for the disobedience of Adam, and our being *regarded* as righteous for the obedience of Christ, that are rendered most conspicuous. Hence Paul begins this verse with *for*. 'We are treated as sinners for the offence of Adam, *for* we are regarded as sinners on his account,' &c. &c. Though the one idea seems thus to be the more prominent in v. 18, and

the other in v. 19, yet it is only a greater degree of prominency to the one, and not the exclusion of the other, that is in either case intended.

By one man's disobedience. The disobedience here is evidently the first transgression of Adam, spoken of in v. 16, as *the one offence.* The *obedience* of Christ here stands for all his work in satisfying the demands of the law; his obedience unto and in death; that by which the law was magnified and rendered honourable, as well as satisfied. From its opposition to the disobedience of Adam, his obedience, strictly speaking, rather than his sufferings, seems to be the prominent idea. The words *the many*, in both clauses of this verse, are obviously equivalent to *the all* of the corresponding clauses of v. 18, and are to be explained in the same manner.

With regard to the first clause of this verse, we meet again the three interpretations to which reference has so frequently been made. That the disobedience of Adam was the occasion of men's becoming sinners. That through that disobedience all men were corrupted, that is, that they have derived a corrupt nature from Adam, which is the immediate ground of their suffering penal evils. That it is on account of his disobedience they are regarded and treated as sinners. With increasing clearness it may be made to appear that here, as elsewhere throughout the passage, the last is the apostle's doctrine.

1. It is in accordance with one of the most familiar of scriptural usages, that the words *to make sinners*, are interpreted as meaning, *to regard and treat as such.* Thus, *to make clean*, *to make unclean*, *to make righteous*, *to make guilty*, are the constant scriptural expressions for *regarding* and *treating* as clean, unclean, righteous, or unrighteous; see on v. 12.

2. The expressions *to make sin*, and *to make righteousness*, occurring in a corresponding sense, illustrate and confirm this interpretation. Thus in 2 Cor. 5: 21, Christ is said to be "made sin," i. e. regarded and treated as a sinner, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," i. e. that we might be regarded and treated as righteous in the sight of God, on his account. 3. The antithesis is here so plain as to be of itself decisive. "To be made righteous" is, according to Professor Stuart, "to be justified, pardoned, regarded and treated as righteous." With what show of consistency, then, can it be denied that "to be made sinners," in the opposite clause, means to be regarded and treated as sinners? If one part of the verse speaks of justification, the other must speak of condemnation. 4. As so often before remarked, the analogy between the case of Adam and Christ requires this interpretation. If the first clause means either that the disobedience of Adam was the occasion of our committing sin, or that it was the cause of our becoming inherently corrupt, and on the ground of these sins, or of this corruption, being condemned; then must the other clause mean that the obedience of Christ is the cause of our becoming holy, or performing good works on the ground of which we are justified. But this confessedly is not the mean-

ing of the apostle. If then the same words, in the same connexion, and the same grammatical construction, must have the same meaning, the interpretation given above must be correct. 5. The design of the apostle to illustrate the great doctrine of the gospel, that men, although in themselves ungodly, are regarded and treated as righteous for Christ's sake, demands this interpretation.

The meaning then of the whole passage is this: BY ONE MAN sin entered into the world, or men were brought to stand in the relation of sinners to God; death consequently passed on all, because, for the offence of that one man, they all became sinners (guilty), i. e. were all regarded and treated as sinners. That this is really the case is plain; because the execution of the penalty of a law cannot be more extensive than its violation; and consequently if all are subject to penal evils, all are regarded as sinners in the sight of God. This universality in the infliction of penal evil cannot be accounted for on the ground of the violation of the law of Moses, since men were subject to such evil before that law was given; nor yet on account of the violation of the more general law written on the heart, since *even* they are subject to this evil who have never personally sinned at all. We must conclude, therefore, that men are regarded and treated as sinners on account of the sin of Adam.

He is, therefore, a type of Christ. The cases, however, are not entirely analogous; for if it is consistent with the divine character that we should suffer for what Adam did, how much more may we expect to be made happy for what Christ has done. Besides, we are condemned for one sin only on Adam's account; whereas Christ saves us not only from the evils consequent on that transgression, but also from the punishment of our own innumerable offences. Now if, for the offence of one, death thus triumphs over all, how much more shall they who receive the grace of the gospel (not only be saved from evil, but) reign in life through Christ Jesus.

Wherefore, as, on account of one, the condemnatory sentence has passed on all the descendants of Adam; so on account of the righteousness of one, gratuitous justification comes on all who receive the grace of Christ; for as on account of the disobedience of one, we are regarded as sinners; so on account of the obedience of the other, we are regarded as righteous.

(20) *Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound*, &c. Paul, having shown that our justification was effected without the intervention of either the moral or Mosaic law, was naturally led to state the design and result of the renewed revelation of the one, and the superinduction of the other. *The law* stands here for the whole of the Old Testament economy, including the clear revelation of the moral law, and all the institutions connected with the former dispensation. The main design and result of this dispensation, considered as *law*, that is, apart from the evangelical import of many of its parts, was *that sin or offence might abound*. There is an ambiguity here in the original, which does

not exist in our version. The Greek may mean either that the design of the introduction of the law was that sin might abound; or, simply, that such was the result. Which idea is to be preferred depends on the view taken of the word rendered *abound*. This word may, according to a very common usage, mean, *to appear*, or *be seen as abounding*; see ch. 4: 5, "Let God be true," i. e. let it be seen and acknowledged that he is true. Agreeably to this view, the meaning of the clause is, that the great design of the law (in reference to justification) is to produce the knowledge and conviction of sin. Taking the word in its usual sense, the meaning is, the result of the introduction of the law was the increase of sin. This result is to be attributed partly to the fact that by enlarging the knowledge of the rule of duty, responsibility was proportionably increased, according to ch. 4: 15; and partly to the consideration that the enmity of the heart is awakened by its operation and transgressions actually multiplied, agreeably to ch. 7: 8. Both views of the passage express an important truth, as the conviction of sin and its incidental increase are alike the result of the operation of the law. It seems, however, more in accordance with the apostle's object, and with the general, although not uniform, force of the particle rendered *that*, to consider the clause as expressing the design, rather than the result, simply, of the giving of the law.

The word *entered* is hardly an adequate translation of the original term. The latter expresses, in Gal. 2: 4, the idea of *surreptitious entrance*, and here probably that of *superinduction*. The law was superinduced on a plan already laid. It was not designed for the accomplishment of man's salvation, that is, either for his justification or sanctification, but for the accomplishment of a very subordinate part in the great scheme of mercy. The Jews, therefore, erred greatly, both by overestimating its importance and mistaking its design. It was never intended to give life.

But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That is, great as is the prevalence of sin, as seen and felt in the light of God's holy law, yet over all this evil the grace of the gospel has abounded. The gospel or the grace of God has proved itself much more efficacious in the production of good, than sin in the production of evil. This idea is illustrated in the following verse.

(21) *That as sin hath reigned unto death*, &c. That is, as sin has powerfully prevailed, and is followed by death as its necessary consequence. The word *reigned* expresses strongly the extended authority and power of sin over the human family; a power which is deadly, destructive of all excellence and happiness.

Even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. The words "righteousness unto eternal life" should not be separated by a comma, as is commonly done in our Bibles. And the word translated *righteousness* should be rendered *justification*, as appears by a comparison with the preceding verses. "Justification

unto eternal life" is the same with the "justification of life" in v. 18; both expressions mean 'that justification which is connected with eternal life.' It will be remarked that these words answer to the *death* spoken of in the preceding clause. As death is the consequence and attendant of sin, so the justification of life is the consequence and attendant of the grace of the gospel.

By Jesus Christ our Lord. To him, and him alone, do we owe it that the reign of sin and death has not produced universal and perpetual desolation. He has brought deliverance from both, and introduction into eternal life.

'Grace *much more* abounds than sin,' 1. Because we have reason to believe, taking into view those who die in infancy, and the probable future state of the church, that the number of the saved will greatly exceed that of the lost. 2. Because Christ does far more than merely repair the evils of sin. He not only delivers us from its power and penalty, but exalts our natures and persons to a state to which we have no reason to suppose they would otherwise ever have attained. 3. Through the redeemed church is to be manifested, in ages to come, to principalities and powers, the manifold wisdom of God. The results of redemption no tongue can tell, no heart conceive.

DOCTRINES.

1. The doctrine of imputation is clearly taught in this passage. This doctrine does not include the idea of a mysterious identity of Adam and his race; nor that of a transfer of the moral turpitude of his sin to his descendants. It does not teach that his offence was personally or properly the sin of all men, or that his act was, in any mysterious sense, the act of his posterity. Neither does it imply, in reference to the righteousness of Christ, that his righteousness becomes personally and inherently ours, or that his moral excellence is in any way transferred from him to believers. The sin of Adam, therefore, is no ground to us of remorse; and the righteousness of Christ is no ground of self-complacency in those to whom it is imputed. This doctrine merely teaches that, in virtue of the union, representative and natural, between Adam and his posterity, his sin is the ground of their condemnation, that is, of their subjection to penal evils; and that, in virtue of the union between Christ and his people, his righteousness is the ground of their justification. This doctrine is taught, almost in so many words, in vs. 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. It is so clearly stated, so often repeated or assumed, and so formally proved, that very few commentators, of any class, fail to acknowledge, in one form or another, that it is the doctrine of the apostle.

2. As the term *death* is used for any and every evil judicially inflicted as the punishment of sin, the amount and nature of the evil not being expressed by the word, it is no part of the apostle's doctrine that eternal misery is inflicted on any man for the sin of Adam, irrespective of inherent depravity or actual transgression. It is enough for all the purposes

of his argument that that sin was the ground of the loss of the divine favour, the withholding of divine influence, and the consequent corruption of our nature.

3. Whatever evil the Scriptures represent as coming upon us on account of Adam, they regard as penal; they call it death, which is the general term by which any penal evil is expressed.

It is not, however, the doctrine of the Scriptures, nor of the reformed churches, nor of our standards, that the corruption of nature of which they speak is any depravation of the soul, or an essential attribute, or the infusion of any positive evil. "Original sin," as the Confessions of the Reformers maintain, "is not the substance of man, neither his soul, nor body; nor is it any thing infused into his nature by Satan, as poison is mixed with wine; it is not an essential attribute, but an accident, i. e. something which does not exist of itself, an incidental quality," &c. Bretschneider, Vol. II. p. 30. These confessions teach that original righteousness, as a punishment of Adam's sin, was lost, *and by that defect* the tendency to sin, or corrupt disposition, or corruption of nature, is occasioned. Though they speak of original sin as being, first, negative, i. e. the loss of righteousness; and, secondly, positive, or corruption of nature; yet by the latter, they state, is to be understood, not the infusion of any thing in itself sinful, but an actual tendency or disposition to evil, resulting from the loss of righteousness. This is clearly expressed in the quotation just made. "There is no necessity," says Goodwin, "of asserting original sin to be a positive quality in our souls, since the privation of righteousness is enough to infect the soul with all that is evil." Yet he, in common with the reformers, represents original sin as having a positive as well as a negative side. This, however, results from the active nature of the soul. If there is no tendency to the love and service of God, there is, from this very defect, a tendency to self and sin.

4. It is included in the doctrines already stated, that mankind have had a fair probation in Adam, their head and representative; and that we are not to consider God as placing them on their probation in the very first dawn of their intellectual and moral existence, and under circumstances (or "a divine constitution") which secure the certainty of their sinning. Such a probation could hardly deserve the name.

5. It is also included in the doctrine of this portion of Scripture, that mankind is an unit, in the sense in which an army, in distinction from a mob, is one; or as a nation, a community, or a family, is one, in opposition to a mere fortuitous collection of individuals. Hence the frequent and extensive transfer of the responsibility and consequences of the acts of the heads of these communities to their several members, and from one member to others. This is a law which pervades the whole moral government and providential dispensations of God. We are not like the separate grains of wheat in a measure; but links in a complicated chain. All influence the destiny of each; and each influences the destiny of all.

6. The design of the apostle being to illustrate the nature and to confirm the certainty of our justification, it is the leading doctrine of this passage, that our acceptance with God is founded neither on our faith nor our good works, but on the obedience or righteousness of Christ, which to us is a free gift. This is the fundamental doctrine of the gospel, vs. 18, 19.

7. The dreadful evil of sin is best seen in the fall of Adam, and in the cross of Christ. By the one offence of one man what a waste of ruin has been spread over the whole world! How far beyond conception the misery that one act occasioned! There was no adequate remedy for this evil but the death of the Son of God, vs. 12, 15, 16, &c.

8. It is the prerogative of God to bring good out of evil, and to make the good triumph over the evil. From the fall has sprung redemption, and from redemption results which eternity alone can disclose, vs. 20, 21.

REMARKS.

1. Every man should bow down before God under the humiliating consciousness that he is a member of an apostate race; the son of a rebellious parent; born estranged from God, and exposed to his displeasure, vs. 12, 15, 16, &c.

2. Every man should thankfully embrace the means provided for his restoration to the divine favour, viz. "the abundance of grace and gift of righteousness," v. 17.

3. Those that perish, perish not because the sin of Adam has brought them under condemnation; nor because no adequate provision has been made for their recovery; but because they will not receive the offered mercy, v. 17.

4. For those who refuse the proffered righteousness of Christ, and insist on trusting to their own righteousness, the evil of sin, and God's determination to punish it, show there can be no reasonable hope; while, for those who humbly receive this gift, there can be no rational ground of fear, v. 15.

5. If, without personal participation in the sin of Adam, all men are subject to death, may we not hope that, without personal acceptance of the righteousness of Christ, all who die in infancy are saved?

6. We should never yield to temptation on the ground that the sin to which we are solicited appears to be a trifle (merely eating a forbidden fruit); or that it is but for ONCE. Remember the ONE offence of one man. How often has a man, or a family, been ruined for ever by ONE sin! v. 12.

7. Our dependence on Jesus Christ is entire, and our obligations to him are infinite. It is through his righteousness, without the shadow of merit on our own part, that we are justified. He alone was adequate to restore the ruins of the fall. From those ruins he has built up a living temple, a habitation of God through the Spirit.

8. We must experience the operation of the law, in producing the

knowledge and conviction of sin, in order to be prepared for the appreciation and reception of the work of Christ. The church and the world were prepared by the legal dispensation of the Old Testament for the gracious dispensation of the New, v. 20.

9. We should open our hearts to the large prospects of purity and blessedness presented in the gospel; the victory of grace over sin and death, which is to be consummated in the triumph of true religion, and in the eternal salvation of those multitudes, out of every tribe and kindred, which no man can number, v. 21.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTENTS.

As the gospel reveals the only effectual method of justification, so also it alone can secure the sanctification of men. To exhibit this truth is the object of this and the following chapter. The sixth is partly argumentative, and partly exhortatory. In verses 1—11 the apostle shows how unfounded is the objection, that gratuitous justification leads to the indulgence of sin. In vs. 12—23 he exhorts Christians to live agreeably to the nature and design of the gospel; and presents various considerations adapted to secure their obedience to this exhortation.

CHAP. 6: 1—11.

[1]What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? [2]God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? [3]Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? [4]Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. [5]For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: [6]knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, and that henceforth we should not serve sin. [7]For he that is dead is freed from sin. [8]Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: [9]knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. [10]For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. [11]Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ANALYSIS.

The most common, the most plausible, and yet the most unfounded objection to the doctrine of justification by faith, is, that it allows men to

live in sin that grace may abound. This objection arises from ignorance of the doctrine in question, and of the nature and means of sanctification. It is so preposterous in the eyes of an enlightened believer, that Paul deals with it rather by exclamations at its absurdity, than with logical arguments. The main idea of this section is, that such is the nature of the believer's union with Christ, that his living in sin is not merely an inconsistency, but a contradiction in terms, as much so as speaking of a live dead man, or a good bad one. Union with Christ, being the only source of holiness, cannot be the source of sin. In v. 1 the apostle presents the objection. In v. 2 he declares it to be unfounded, and exclaims at its absurdity. In vs. 3, 4 he exhibits the true nature and design of Christianity, as adapted and intended to produce newness of life. In vs. 5—7 he shows that such is the nature of union with Christ, that it is impossible for any one to share the benefits of his death without being conformed to his life. Such being the case, he shows, vs. 8—11, that as Christ's death on account of sin was for once, never to be repeated; and his life a life devoted to God; so our separation from sin is final, and our life a life consecrated to God.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *What shall we say then?* What inference is to be drawn from the doctrine of the gratuitous acceptance of sinners, or justification without works by faith in the righteousness of Christ?

Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? i. e. be more conspicuously displayed. The form in which the objection to the apostle's doctrine is here presented, is evidently borrowed from the close of the preceding chapter. Paul had there spoken of the grace of the gospel being the more conspicuous and abundant in proportion to the evils which it removes. It is no fair inference from the fact that God has brought so much good out of the fall and sinfulness of men, that they may continue in sin. Neither can it be inferred from the fact that he accepts of sinners, on the ground of the merit of Christ, instead of their own (which is the way in which grace abounds), that they may sin without restraint.

(2) *God forbid*, in the Greek, *let it not be.* Paul's usual mode of expressing denial and abhorrence. Such an inference is not to be thought of. *How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* How can good men be bad men? or, how can the dead be alive? It is a contradiction and an absurdity, that those who are dead to sin should live in it. There are two points to be here considered. The first is the sense in which Christians are said to be dead to sin; and the second, the proof (vs. 3, 4) that such is really the case with all true believers. The words rendered *we that are dead to sin* (we that have died to die), may mean have died on account of sin, or in respect to sin. The latter is more consistent with the usual force of the expression, as in the phrases, "dead to the law;" "dead to sins," &c. &c., which mean *free from, delivered from the influence of.* In this case probably the apostle intended to

express the general idea that our connexion with sin had been effectually broken off. This is effected, as he immediately teaches, by the death of Christ. His meaning, therefore, is, 'How can those who, in virtue of their union with Christ, have been effectually freed from the dominion of sin, live any longer therein?' It enters into the very idea of a Christian that he should be thus dead to sin, and his living in it consequently involves a contradiction.

(3) *Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?* In this and the following verse we have something more in the form of argument in answer to the objection in question. The apostle reminds his readers that the very design of Christianity was to deliver men from sin; that every one who embraced it, embraced it for this very object; and, therefore, it was a contradiction in terms to suppose that any should come to Christ to be delivered from sin in order that they might live in it. And, besides this, it is clearly intimated that such is not only the design of the gospel, and the object for which it is embraced by all who cordially receive it, but also that the result or necessary effect of union with Christ is a participation in the benefits of his death.

Were baptized into Jesus Christ. In the phrase *to be baptized into any one*, the word rendered *into* has its usual force as indicating the object, design, or result for which any thing is done. To be baptized into Jesus Christ, or unto Moses, or Paul, therefore, means to be baptized in order to be united to Christ, or Moses, or Paul, as their followers, the recipients of their doctrines, and expectants of the blessings which they have to bestow; see Matt. 28: 19. 1 Cor. 10: 2. 1 Cor. 1: 13. In like manner, in the expression *baptized into his death*, the preposition expresses the design and the result. The meaning, therefore, is, 'we were baptized in order that we should die with him,' i. e. that we should be united to him in his death, and partakers of its benefits. Thus "baptism unto repentance," Matt. 3: 11, is baptism in order to repentance; "baptism unto the remission of sins," Mark 1: 4, that remission of sins may be obtained; "baptized into one body," 1 Cor. 12: 13, i. e. that we might become one body, &c. The idea of the whole verse, therefore, is, 'That as many as have been baptized into Jesus Christ, have become intimately united with him, so that they are united with him in his death, conformed to its object, and participate in the blessings for which he died.' Much to the same effect the apostle says, Gal. 3: 27, "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ," i. e. have become intimately united to him. Paul uses the expression *baptized into Christ*, not for the mere external or formal profession of the religion of the gospel, but for the cordial reception of it, of which submission to the rite of baptism was the public and appointed expression. The meaning, therefore, is, that those who have sincerely embraced Jesus Christ, have done it so as to be united to him, conformed to his image and the design for which he died. Christ died in order that he might destroy the works

of the devil, 1 John 3: 8; to save his people from their sins, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Tit. 2: 14.

(4) *Therefore we are buried by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up*, &c. 'Such being the nature and design of the gospel, if we accept of Christ at all, it is that we should die with him; i. e. that we should attain the object for which he died, viz. deliverance from sin;' or, to use the apostle's figurative expression, that as Christ was raised from the dead, we also might walk in newness of life.

The words *into death* are evidently to be connected with the word *baptism*; it is *by a baptism unto death* that we are united to Christ, as stated in the preceding verse. We are said to *be buried with Christ*; i. e. we are effectually united to him in his death. The same idea is expressed in v. 8, by saying "we are dead with him;" and in v. 5, by saying we are "planted together in the likeness of his death." It does not seem necessary to suppose that there is any allusion to the mode of baptism, as though that rite was compared to a burial. No such allusion can be supposed in the next verse, where we are said *to be planted* with him. Baptism is, throughout this passage, as in Gal. 3: 27, taken for the reception of Christ, of which it is the appointed acknowledgment. The point of the comparison is not between our baptism and the burial and resurrection of Christ; but between our death to sin and rising to holiness; and the death and resurrection of the Redeemer. As Paul had expressed, in v. 2, the idea of the freedom of believers from sin, by the figurative phrase "dead to sin," he carries the figure consistently through; and says, that by our reception of Christ we became united to him in such a way as to die as he died, and to rise as he rose. As he died unto sin (for its destruction), so do we; and as he rose unto newness of life, so do we.

Christ is said to have been raised up *by the glory of the Father*. Some would render these words *on account of the glory*, &c. But this is inconsistent with usage. They either are equivalent to *glorious Father*, see ch. 1: 23, 25; or the word rendered *glory* may be used for *power* or *might*, as in the Septuagint, Isa. 12: 2. 45: 24. Compare Col. 1: 11. *Even so we also should walk in newness of life*. These words express the design for which we receive Christ or were baptized unto him; it is that we should exhibit that new life which we receive from him, and which is analogous to his own, inasmuch as it is unending and devoted unto God; see vs. 9, 10, where this idea is more fully expressed.

(5) *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death*, &c. As the preceding verse had declared the object of our union with Christ to be newness of life; this verse exhibits the necessary connexion between the means and the end, by showing that we cannot be united to Christ in his death, without being united to him also in his resurrection.

For if we have been planted together. The original word here used means properly *connate, born together*; but it is applied variously to

things intimately united, as things growing together, to branches of the same tree, limbs of the same body, &c. &c. The idea, therefore, here expressed by it, is an intimate and vital union with Christ, such as exists between a vine and its branches. Compare John 15: 1—8.

In the likeness of his death; i. e. in a death similar to his. We die as he died. This results from the fact of our intimate union with him. Hence, in v. 6, we are said "to be crucified with him;" and, in v. 8, "to be dead with him." If we are so united to Christ as to die with him (i. e. to obtain the benefits of his death), we also die as he died. This accounts for the introduction of the word *likeness*, expressive of a comparison between our death to sin and the death of Christ. But we experience this similar or spiritual death only because of the union with Christ, in virtue of which his death was, in the sight of God, equivalent to our death.

We shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. The future tense, *shall*, does not here express obligation merely, but also and mainly the certainty of the result. 'If united to Christ in his death, we shall be also in his resurrection. That is, we shall experience a resurrection similar to his, viz. an entrance on a new, glorious, and perpetual life.' That a spiritual resurrection is here principally intended, seems very plain, both from the preceding and succeeding context. And yet the idea of the future resurrection of the body is not to be entirely excluded. Paul, in ch. 8: 11, brings the resurrection of the body forward as a necessary consequence of our union with Christ, or of our having the Spirit of life dwelling in us. The meaning probably is, that if we are true Christians, baptized into the death of Christ, united and conformed to him in this respect, the necessary result will be that the life of Christ will be manifested in us by a holy and devoted life here, by a life of glorious immortality, and by the resurrection of the body hereafter. All this is included in the *life* consequent on our union with Christ.

(6) *Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him*, &c. This verse is either an amplification or confirmation of the preceding. 'If united with the Lord Jesus,' says the apostle, 'in his death, we shall be in his life, for we know that we are crucified with him for this very reason, viz. that the body of sin might be destroyed.' In this view of the passage it is little more than an amplification of v. 5. But it may also be viewed thus, 'We are sure we shall be conformed to the life of Christ, because we know that our old corruptions have been destroyed by his death, in order that we should no longer serve them.' This verse then assigns the reason for the assertion contained in the last clause of the fifth.

The phrase *old man* generally means the natural corruption, or unholy affections of men. See Eph. 4: 22, "Put ye off the old man which is corrupt;" Col. 3: 9, "Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man." The apostle then says, that Christians know that the effect of union with Christ is the de-

struction of the power of sin. There is probably no allusion in the use of the word *crucified*, either to the slowness or painfulness of that particular mode of death, as though the apostle meant to intimate that the destruction of sin was a gradual and painful process. This indeed is true, but is not here expressed. The simple expression "dead with him," is substituted for this word in v. 8, and in Gal. 2: 20, "I am crucified with Christ," contains no such allusion. It is more probable, as Calvin remarks, that the word is used to intimate that it is solely in virtue of our participation in the death of Christ that we are delivered from the power of sin.

That the body of sin might be destroyed. The expression *body of sin* is probably a mere paraphrase for sin itself, see Col. 2: 11; yet it is no doubt used with design, as sin is spoken of as a person that dies, whose members we are to mortify, and whom we are no longer to serve. The destruction of sin results from the death of Christ, inasmuch as we are thereby reconciled to God, and brought under the influence of all the considerations which flow from the doctrine of redemption, see v. 14; and because his death secures for us the Holy Spirit, who is the source of all holiness, ch. 8: 3, 4, 9.

That henceforth we should not serve sin, i. e. be slaves to it. This clause expresses at once the result and design of the destruction of the power of sin. Paul's whole argument then in these two verses is, 'Such is the nature of our union with Christ, that if we partake of the benefits of his death, and are conformed to him in this respect, we shall certainly be conformed to his life; because by his death the power of sin is destroyed.'

(7) *For he that is dead is free from sin.* The meaning of this verse is somewhat doubtful. It may be considered as merely a statement of a general truth, designed for the illustration and confirmation of what Paul had just said. 'Death puts a final stop to all activity in this world. He that dies is entirely separated from all former pursuits and objects; they have lost all power over him, and he all interest in them. To be dead to sin, therefore, expresses a full and final separation from it.' Or the meaning may be this, 'What has just been said is true, for he that is dead with Christ is judicially free from sin; its power and authority are destroyed, as effectually as the authority of a husband over his wife (ch. 7: 3, 4), or of a master over his slave (v. 18), is destroyed by death.' There are three ways, therefore, in which this verse may be explained. 1. As expressing a mere general truth. 2. By supplying, after the word *dead* the words *to sin*, 'He that is dead to sin, is free from it.' 3. By supplying the words *with Christ*, 'He that is dead with Christ is free from sin.' This last method seems the preferable one, on account of the relation of this verse to vs. 6, 8, "He that is dead (with Christ) is free from sin, for if we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live with him."

Is free from sin; literally, *is justified from sin. Is justified from*

sin means, is pardoned, is freed from the guilt and punishment of sin by justification. This verse then assigns a very important reason for the truth which the apostle had so frequently stated, viz. that the believer could not live in sin. 'For he that is dead with Christ is thereby justified, and freed from the punishment of sin; he is thus reconciled to God; and as reconciliation and communion with God are the true sources of holiness, he is also freed from sin.' This interpretation is confirmed by the next verse, in which our dying with Christ is represented as securing our living with him. See Gal. 2: 19, 20. 6: 14. Col. 2: 6. 3: 3. 1 Pet. 4: 1. In all these passages, with more or less distinctness, the death of Christ, and believers dying with him, are represented as the ground and cause of their living unto God.

Verses 8—11. These verses contain the application of the truth taught in the preceding passage. 'If we are dead with Christ, we shall share in his life. If he lives, we shall live also. As his life is perpetual, it secures the continued supplies of life to all his members. Death has no more dominion over him. Having died unto, or on account of sin once, he now ever lives to, and with God. His people, therefore, must be conformed to him; dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.' This passage does not contain a mere comparison between the literal death and resurrection of Christ, and the spiritual death and resurrection of believers, but it exhibits the connexion between the death and life of the Redeemer and the sanctification of his people.

(8) *Now if we be dead with Christ*, &c. If the truth stated in the preceding verses is admitted, viz. that our union with Christ is such that his death secures our deliverance from the penalty and power of sin, *we believe we shall also live with him.* That is, we are sure that the consequences of his death are not merely negative, i. e. not simply deliverance from evil, moral and physical, but also a participation in his life. *To live with Christ*, therefore, includes two ideas, association with him, and similarity to him. We partake of his life, and consequently our life is like his. In like manner, since we die *with* him, we die *as* he died. So, too, when we are said *to reign with him, to be glorified together*, both these ideas, are included; see ch. 8: 17, and many similar passages. The life here spoken of is that "eternal life" which believers are said to possess even in this world; see John 3: 36. 5: 24; and which is manifested here by devotion to God, and hereafter in the purity and blessedness of heaven. It includes, therefore, all the consequences of redemption.

(9) *Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more.* The perpetuity of Christ's life is presented, 1. As the ground of assurance of the perpetuity of the life of believers. We shall partake of the life of Christ, i. e. of the spiritual and eternal blessings of redemption, because he ever lives to make intercession for us, and to grant us those supplies of grace which we need, see ch. 5: 10. John 14: 19. 1 Cor. 15: 23, &c. &c. As death has no more dominion over him, there is no ground of apprehension that our supplies of life shall be cut off. This

verse, therefore, is introduced as the ground of the declaration "we shall live with him," at the close of v. 8. 2. The perpetuity of the life of Christ is one of the points in which our life is to be conformed to his.

(10) *For in that he died, he died unto sin once*, &c. This verse is an amplification and explanation of the preceding. Christ's life is perpetual, inasmuch as his dying unto sin was for once only; but as he lives, he lives for ever in the presence, and to the glory of God. It is evident that Christ's dying *unto sin* must be understood in a different sense from that in which we are said to die *unto sin*. The dative probably here, as so often elsewhere, expresses the ground or reason for which any thing is done; see on v. 2, 'He died on account of sin.' The phrase, therefore, is to be understood as those in Gal. 1: 4. Rom. 4: 25, &c. &c., where he is said to have died *for sin*, i. e. for its expiation and destruction. This sacrifice, unlike the impotent offerings under the law, was so efficacious that it never need be repeated; and therefore Christ, having once suffered death, is never again to be subject to its dominion, Heb. 9: 28. 1 Pet. 3: 18.

But in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. The structure of this sentence is antithetical, agreeably to Paul's manner, see ch. 5: 10; and this accounts for the form of the expression *he liveth unto God*, which is opposed to the phrase *he died unto sin*. Christ lives to the glory of God and in communion with him. This is the second point in which our life is to be conformed to his. It is to be not only perpetual, i. e. without relapse into spiritual death, but also devoted to the service and enjoyment of God.

(11) This verse contains an inference from the preceding discussion, and an application of it to the case of Christians. If Christ has died for the destruction and expiation of sin, and if all who belong to him are united to him in his death so as to have their sins expiated and destroyed; and if, moreover, their head, in whom they live, has risen to a new and endless life of glory and holiness, then let Christians view their relation to Christ in its true light, and live accordingly.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves as dead indeed, unto sin, &c. That is, regard yourselves as having died with Christ for deliverance from the guilt of sin, see vs. 5, 6, 8; and also for the destruction of its power, see vs. 6, 7. *But alive unto God.* Let believers consider themselves partakers not only of the death of Christ, but also of his life. As his life is perpetual and devoted unto God, so also must theirs be. *Through Jesus Christ our Lord.* It is through Christ that we die unto sin, and live unto God. It is not we that live, but Christ who liveth in us, Gal. 2: 19. The words rendered *through Christ* may be more literally translated *in Christ*, i. e. it is in virtue of union with him that we die unto sin and live unto God.

DOCTRINES.

1. Truth cannot lead to unholiness. If a doctrine encourages sin it must be false, vs. 1, 2.

2. There can be no greater contradiction and absurdity than for one who lives in sin to claim to be a Christian, v. 2.

3. Antinomianism is not only an error, it is a falsehood and a slander. It pronounces valid the very objection against the gospel which Paul pronounces a contradiction and absurdity, and which he evidently regards as a fatal objection, were it well founded, vs. 2, 3, 4, &c.

4. Baptism includes a profession of the religion taught by him in whose name we are baptized, and an obligation to obey his laws, vs. 3, 4.

5. The grand design of Christianity is the destruction of sin. When sincerely embraced, therefore, it is with a view to this end, v. 3.

6. The source of the believer's holiness is his union with Christ, by which his reconciliation to God, and his participation of the influences of the Holy Spirit, are secured, vs. 4, 6.

7. The fact that Christ lives is sufficient security that his people shall live in holiness here, and in glory hereafter, v. 8.

8. The only proper evidence that we are the partakers of the benefits of the death and life of Christ, is our dying to sin and living to God, v. 11, and the whole section.

9. The gospel, which teaches the only true method of justification, is the only system which can secure the sanctification of men. This is not only the doctrine of this section, but it is the leading truth of this and the following chapter.

REMARKS.

1. As the most prominent doctrinal truth of this passage is, that the death of Christ secures the destruction of sin wherever it secures its pardon, so the most obvious practical inference is, that it is vain to hope for the latter benefit, unless we labour for the full attainment of the former, vs. 2—11.

2. For a professing Christian to live in sin, is not only to give positive evidence that he is not a real Christian, but it is to misrepresent and slander the gospel of the grace of God, to the dishonour of religion and the injury of the souls of men, vs. 2—11.

3. Instead of holiness being in order to pardon, pardon is in order to holiness. This is the mystery of evangelical morals, v. 4, &c.

4. The only effectual method of gaining the victory over our sins, is to live in communion with Jesus Christ; to regard his death as securing the pardon of sin, as restoring us to the divine favour, and as procuring for us the influences of the Holy Spirit. It is those who thus look to Christ, not only for pardon but holiness, that are successful in subduing sin; while the *legalist* remains its slave, vs. 6, 8.

5. It is a consolation to the believer to know that, if he has the evidence of being *now* a Christian, he may be sure that he shall live with Christ. As long and as surely as the head lives, so long and so surely must all the members live, v. 8, &c.

6. To be in Christ is the source of the Christian's life; to be like Christ is the sum of his excellence; and to be with Christ is the fulness of his joy, vs. 2—11.

CHAP. 6: 12—23.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ANALYSIS.

Paul, having shown, in the preceding section, that union with Christ secures not only the pardon, but the destruction of sin, exhorts his brethren to live agreeably to the nature and design of the gospel, vs. 12, 13. As an encouragment in their efforts to resist their corruptions, he assures them that sin shall not have dominion over them, because they are not under the law, but under grace, v. 14. This is another fundamental principle in the doctrine of sanctification. Holiness is not attained and cannot be attained by those who, being under the law, are still unreconciled to God. It is necessary that we should enjoy his favour in order to exercise towards him right affections. This doctrine is not justly liable to the objection, that we may sin with impunity if not under the law, v. 15. The true situation of the Christian is illustrated by a reference to the relation between a servant and his master. Believers, before conversion, were the servants of sin; after it, they are the servants of righteousness. Formerly they were under an influence which secured their obedience to evil; now they are under an influence which secures their obedience to good. The consequence of the former service was death;

of the present, life. The knowledge of these consequences tends to secure the continued fidelity of the Christian to his new master, vs. 16—23.

COMMENTARY.

(12) *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body*, &c. 'Seeing that the design and nature of the gospel are such as stated in the preceding section, those who profess to have embraced that system, or to be united to Christ, should show the evidence of their union by holiness of life.' *To reign*, of course, signifies to exercise uncontrolled authority. The exhortation is, that Christians should not recognise or yield to this authority of sin. The words *mortal body* admit of various interpretations. They may be a mere paraphrase for *you*, 'Let not sin reign in you.' So, in the next verse, *your members* may stand for *yourselves*. 2. Others take the word *mortal* in the same figurative sense in which the word *dead* is used, i. e. for *corrupt*. But, in this sense, *mortal* nowhere else occurs. 3. Others again take *body*, in the sense of *flesh*, for *corrupt nature*. But this also is contrary to usage. It is most probable, therefore, that the words are to be retained in their literal and proper meaning. "Let not sin reign in or over your body." This includes the idea that the body is the instrument of sin; or that it is by the actions of the body that the existence and dominion of indwelling sin is, in a great measure, manifested; and especially that a great part of sin consists in yielding to the appetites or desires of the body. This latter idea is clearly expressed in the following clause, *that ye should obey it* (sin) *in the lusts thereof* (the body). We should not allow sin to reign; that is, we should not obey it, by yielding to the desires of the body.

(13) *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin*, &c. The word rendered *to yield unto* means, *to give up to the use and control of*; see Matt. 26: 53. The word *members* includes the faculties of the mind as well as the members of the body; compare Col. 3: 5, "Mortify your members which are upon the earth," &c. The expression is a paraphrase for *yourselves*; which word is substituted for it in the next clause. There is, however, an obvious reference to the preceding verse and the expression *your body*. The exhortation, therefore, is not to yield ourselves up to sin as instruments for doing evil. The word rendered *instruments*, though it most frequently means *arms*, is used for *implements* of any kind and for any purpose.

But yield yourselves unto God, give yourselves up to the use and control of God. *As those that are alive from the dead.* This clause, which is descriptive both of the state and character of believers, is evidently derived from the preceding representation of Christians as being dead with Christ unto sin, and living with him unto God. They are required to act as those who are partakers of the life of Christ; as those whom God has quickened and made to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus, Eph. 2: 5, 6. *And your members*, your faculties of mind

and body, *as instruments of righteousness unto God.* This clause is simply explanatory of the former.

(14) *For sin shall not have dominion over you*, &c. This clause is variously explained. Some make the future here to express obligation, 'Sin ought not to have dominion over you.' But this is not the natural force of the words; and, in this case, it is not only unnecessary, but inconsistent with the context, inasmuch as the following clause "ye are not under law," &c. would, in a great measure, lose its force. The common interpretation gives a much better sense, 'Live devoted to God, be faithful in your efforts to live to his glory, for you shall be successful; sin shall not have dominion over you.' Then follows the ground of this assurance.

For ye are not under the law, but under grace. To be under the law means to be under its authority, see Gal. 4: 2, 4; and to be under its constraining influence, see Rom. 3: 9. Both ideas are here included. We are not under the authority of the law, nor have we a legal spirit. We are not only free from its objective authority, but from its subjective influence. That *the law* here does not mean the Mosaic law or dispensation merely, is evident, 1. From the absence of the article in the Greek. Paul would have said, 'ye are not under *the* law,' and not so generally, 'ye are not under law,' had he referred especially to the law of Moses. 2. The sense afforded does not suit the context. Freedom from the Mosaic institutions is no security that sin shall not have dominion over us. 3. The opposition to the word *grace* shows that this cannot be the apostle's meaning. *Grace*, here, as in ch. 5: 2, means state of favour. *To be under grace*, therefore, is to be under a gracious dispensation, or in a state of reconciliation with God. *To be under law*, on the other hand, means to be in a legal state, or under a legal dispensation. 4. This interpretation is inconsistent with the apostle's doctrines and reasoning throughout the epistle. It is not the Mosaic law and ceremonial works which he declares to be insufficient, but any law and any works. As the form, however, in which a legal spirit manifested itself in the days of the apostles, was by a desire to enforce the law of Moses, the expression has often a special reference to the Old Testament economy, see Gal. 4: 11. The law means the whole rule of duty of which the Mosaic institutions were for a long time a prominent part; but to restrict the term in this connexion to that part, is inconsistent with the scope of the apostle's argument, and with the nature of the gospel as the means of deliverance, not from ceremonial observances only, but from the obligation of the law as a rule of justification.

Believers, therefore, are not under the law as the rule which prescribes the condition of their acceptance with God; nor are they under the influence of a legal spirit. They are under grace, inasmuch as they are under a dispensation which proffers to them gratuitous acceptance, and, being reconciled to God, they are under the constraining influence of his love. The great principle of evangelical obedience is therefore taught in this passage. Holiness is not the result of the law, but of the liberty where-

with Christ has made us free. While under the law, our spirit is legal and slavish; and our works are works of constraint and fear. When under grace, our spirit is filial and free (ch. 8 : 15); and our works spontaneous and cordial. Paul teaches this doctrine at length in the next chapter, and shows that the freedom from the law, which the legal moralist says must lead to licentiousness, is essential to holiness.

(15) *What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.* Paul evinces constantly his anxiety to avoid misapprehension, and to show that freedom from the law is very different from being free from moral obligation. He, therefore, for the second time, denies that the liberty of the gospel is a liberty to sin. As the illustration and confirmation of the principle of v. 14, are formally resumed at the beginning of the next chapter, the apostle contents himself here with proving the unsoundness of the objection presented in this verse, by showing that it is as impossible for the Christian to live in sin, as for the slave of one man to be obedient to another; or for a man to serve two masters at the same time.

(16) *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey*, &c. 'Know ye not that those who obey sin are its slaves; hurried on from one degrading service to another, until it works their ruin; but that those who serve holiness are constrained, though sweetly, to constancy and fidelity, until the glorious consummation of their course?' As a servant or slave is under an influence which secures obedience to his master, so also, in spiritual or moral relations, a man who serves sin is under an influence which secures the continuance of his obedience, and he who serves holiness is under an influence which effectually secures the constancy of his service. This being the case, it is not possible for the Christian or servant of holiness to be found engaged in the service of sin. The language and the construction are here nearly the same as in v. 13. To yield ourselves as servants unto any one, is to give ourselves up to his authority and control. All unrenewed men give themselves up to sin under one form or another. They are, therefore, its slaves, kept faithful to this service, and reap its final reward. Christians, on the other hand, give themselves up to holiness, and are kept faithful and receive their reward. This is more fully expressed in the next clause.

Whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. The expression *servants of obedience* is very unusual. From the opposition, however, between *sin* and *obedience*, the latter must mean *holiness* or *goodness* in general, although no precisely similar use of the word occurs, see ch. 5 : 19. In like manner, from the antithesis between *death* and *righteousness*, the one being the result of sin, and the other of obedience, it is evident that the latter must be taken metonymically for the effects of righteousness, i. e. the favour of God, happiness, the opposite of death

(17) *But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart*, &c. As it is the apostle's object to show that

believers cannot live in sin, inasmuch as they have become the servants of another master, he applies the general truth stated in the preceding verses more directly to his immediate readers, and gives thanks that they, being emancipated from their former bondage, are now bound to a master whose service is perfect liberty. The expression in the first member of this verse is somewhat unusual, although the sense is plain. 'God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but,' &c. for 'God be thanked, that ye, being the servants of sin, have obeyed,' &c.

But ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. The construction of the original is here doubtful and difficult. It may be resolved thus, 'Ye have obeyed that form of doctrine into which ye have been delivered, i. e. to which ye have become subjected.' Or the sentence may be thus explained, 'Ye have obeyed that form or doctrine which was delivered unto you.' Compare Rom. 3 : 2. Gal. 2 : 7. '*Which was delivered unto you*,' for '*which ye had* (or possessed) *delivered*.' The grammatical structure of the sentence is in this case entirely different from that assumed in the former explanation, but the sense is much the same. The general idea is, ye have obeyed the doctrines which ye have received.

Form of doctrine. Form, i. e. type, image, model, rule. The word has all these meanings. The last seems the best suited to this passage. They were obedient to the gospel as a rule of faith and practice. If even in ordinary cases a servant is obedient to his master, there is little reason to apprehend that Christians, who, *from the heart* have become obedient to the gospel, will relapse into the service of sin.

(18) *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.* Having been emancipated from one master, they became subject to another. The illustration is the same as in the preceding verses. It is absurd that a slave just emancipated should voluntarily return to his former bondage; so it is absurd to suppose that the Christian, delivered from the bondage of sin, should return to it. For the service to which he is introduced is, in fact, liberty in its highest and truest sense. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," John 8 : 36.

(19) *I speak after the manner of men on account of the infirmity of your flesh*, &c. The phrase *I speak after the manner of men* means, in this case, 'I say what is common among men,' i. e. I use an illustration borrowed from the common affairs of life. The apostle appears to have felt that the illustration was inadequate and beneath the dignity of his subject. He, therefore, states why he used it. He was forced to borrow a comparison from the relations of men *on account of the infirmity of their flesh*. This, according to the familiar scriptural idiom, means *carnal infirmity*. The two ideas of weakness and corruption are commonly united in the scriptural use of the word *flesh*. The apostle, therefore, means to intimate that it was on account of a want of spiritual apprehension on the part of his readers, or because of a weakness arising from their being corrupt, that he was obliged to use such figures.

What he seems to have regarded as incongruous, is the comparison of the believer's devotion to God and holiness, to a slavery, while it is a voluntary and delightful service. The point of the comparison, however, is merely the devotion and constancy of the obedience.

For as ye have yielded your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness. The word *for*, at the beginning of this clause, connects it with v. 18; the first part of this verse being parenthetical. 'Being free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness, *for* as ye yielded your members to sin, so now have ye yielded them to righteousness.' The last clause of the verse Paul expresses exhortatively instead of declaratively, as the regular structure of the sentence would seem to require. Although the general sense of these clauses is perfectly obvious, there is some doubt as to the precise meaning of the apostle. The words *unto iniquity* and *unto holiness*, in the two members of the sentence, evidently correspond to each other. The preposition *unto* probably points out the result. 'Ye served uncleanness unto iniquity, i. e. so as to become iniquitous; even so ye serve righteousness unto holiness, i. e. so as to become holy.' This is the most natural interpretation. It is, however, possible to understand the phrases "iniquity unto iniquity," and "righteousness unto holiness," as expressing the ideas of intensity and progress. Compare the expressions "death unto death," i. e. very deadly, and "life unto life," &c.

(20) *For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.* This verse may be understood either as a mere statement of the fact, that when the servants of the one master they were not the servants of the other; or as referring to the state of feeling of those intended. 'When the servants of sin, ye felt indeed free from all the restraints of righteousness; ye enjoyed a kind of liberty, but what is the fruit o such liberty?' v. 21. According to this latter view, freedom from r ghteousness is regarded as a kind of advantage in the sinner's estimation, which Paul shows in the next verse to be of no value. The former view, however, seems the most simple and natural, as well as most consistent with the context, and with the use of *for* at the beginning of the verse. As a motive for obedience to the exhortation contained in v. 19, Paul reminds them that they were formerly the servants of a far different master, of the nature and results of whose service he speaks in the next verse.

(21, 22) In these verses the apostle refers to the different character and results of the service of sin and holiness, as a reason for continued devotion to God. *What fruit had ye then in those things of which ye are now ashamed?* &c. As thus translated and pointed, this clause can hardly have any other meaning than, 'What was the result of your former service or mode of life?' The answer to this question is found in the latter part of the verse, *the end of those things is death.* This supposes the words for *those things* or *works* to be supplied, as they are not

expressed in the text. This interpretation gives a good sense, and is consistent with the use of the phrase *to have fruit of*, in the sense of deriving benefit from.

For the end of those things is death. The sense of this clause depends on the preceding. If the interpretation of the former part of the sentence just given be adopted, *those things* must refer to the works of which the converted sinner is now ashamed. *End* means the result, that to which the things in question lead. *Death* here, as in v. 23 and elsewhere, stands for all the evils consequent on sin.

(22) *But now being made free from sin, and become the servants of God*, &c. 'When the servants of sin, ye were employed in a way which ye now blush to remember, and which could end only in hopeless degradation and misery; but now, being free from that bondage, and bound in sweet bonds to God, ye are enriched with holiness here, and have the certain prospect of eternal life hereafter.' *Being free from sin*, i. e. emancipated from bondage to it; see the corresponding phrase *free from righteousness*, v. 20. *Become the servants of God*, i. e. having become slaves to God. It is the use of this word which led Paul to state why he was led to employ such an illustration, in some respects so little suited to the relation of the believer to God. The service is not slavish either in its motive or character. Still, it is faithful and well secured, and these ideas are the point of the comparison.

Ye have your fruit unto holiness. Fruit unto holiness may be either *fruit which is holiness*, or *fruit which tends to holiness*, i. e. produces it. This is most natural. The result of the service of God is sanctification here, and eternal life hereafter. *And the end eternal life.* Not only is this service the most elevated and blessed in its own nature, but its certain consummation is eternal life. Life in all the senses in which Christ causes his people to live.

(23) *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* The reason stated in this verse for the declaration of the preceding is, that sin earns and deserves death. There is as much an obligation in justice that death should be the consequence of sin, as that the labourer should have his hire. The result of the other service is equally sure, although on other grounds; such is the purpose of God. Hell is always merited, heaven never. The connexion between sin and misery is that between labour and its just reward; the connexion between obedience to God and eternal happiness is merely that of grace and congruity. 'Vessels of mercy prepared unto glory.' The preparation is of grace as well as the reward. *Through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Jesus Christ and his gospel, then, instead of being the ministers of sin, as their opposers so confidently asserted, effectually secure what the law never could accomplish, an obedience consisting in holiness and resulting in eternal life.

DOCTRINES.

1. The leading doctrine of this section, and of the whole gospel, in reference to sanctification, is, that grace, instead of leading to the indulgence of sin, is essential to the exercise of holiness. So long as we are under the influence of a self-righteous or legal spirit, the motive and aim of all good works are wrong or defective. The motive is fear, or some merely natural affection, and the aim, to merit the bestowment of good. But when we accept of the gracious offers of the gospel, and feel that our sins are gratuitously pardoned, a sense of the divine love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, awakens all holy affections. The motive to obedience is now love, and its aim the glory of God, v. 14, &c.

2. Paul teaches that it is not only obligatory on Christians to renounce the service of sin, but that, in point of fact, the authority and power of their former master are destroyed, and those of their new master experienced, whenever they embrace the gospel. This is the very nature of the change. The charge, therefore, that the gospel leads to the service of sin, is an absurdity, vs. 15—18.

3. Religion is essentially active. It is the yielding up of ourselves, with all our powers, to God, and the actual employment of them as instruments in doing good. Nothing can be at a greater remove from this, than making religion a mere matter of indolent profession; a saying Lord, Lord, v. 12, &c.

4. Both from the nature of things, and the appointment of God, the wages of sin is death. It renders intercourse with God, who is the fountain of life, impossible. It consists in the exercise of feelings, in their own nature, inconsistent with happiness; it constantly increases in malignity and in power to destroy the peace of the soul. Apart from these essential tendencies, its relation to conscience and the justice of God, renders the connexion between sin and misery indissoluble. Salvation in sin is as much a contradiction, as happiness in misery, vs. 21, 23.

5. Eternal life is the GIFT of God. It does not, like eternal death, flow, as a natural consequence, from any thing in us. With the holy angels, who have never lost the favour of God, this may be the case. But the tendency of all that belongs to us, is to death; this must be counteracted; those excellences, in which life consists and from which it flows, must be produced, sustained and strengthened by the constant, condescending, and long-suffering grace of the Holy Spirit. The life thus graciously produced and graciously sustained, is at last graciously crowned with eternal glory, vs. 22, 23.

REMARKS.

1. We should cultivate a sense of the divine favour as a means to holiness. We must cease to be slaves before we can be children. We must be free from the dominion of fear before we can be under the government of love. A self-righteous spirit, therefore, is not more inconsistent with

reliance on the righteousness of Christ, in order to justification, than it is with the existence and progress of sanctification. Whatever tends to destroy a sense of the divine favour, must be inimical to holiness. Hence the necessity of keeping a conscience void of offence; and of maintaining uninterrupted our union with Christ, as our sacrifice and advocate, v. 14, &c.

2. Those Christians are under a great mistake, who suppose that despondency is favourable to piety. Happiness is one of the elements of life. Hope and joy are twin daughters of piety, and cannot, without violence and injury, be separated from their parent. To rejoice is as much a duty as it is a privilege, v. 14, &c.

3. Sinners are slaves. Sin reigns over them; and all their powers are delivered to this master as instruments of unrighteousness. He secures obedience with infallible certainty; his bonds become stronger every day, and his wages are death. From his tyranny and recompense there is no deliverance by the law; our only hope is in Jesus Christ our Lord, vs. 12, 13, 16, &c.

4. Christians are the servants of God. He reigns over them, and all their powers are consecrated to him. He, too, secures fidelity, and his bonds of love and duty become stronger every day. His reward is eternal life, vs. 12, 13, 16, &c.

5. It is of God, that those who were once the servants of sin, become the servants of righteousness. To him, therefore, all the praise and gratitude belong, v. 17.

6. When a man is the slave of sin, he commonly thinks himself free; and when most degraded, is often the most proud. When truly free, he feels himself most strongly bound to God; and when most elevated, is most humble, vs. 20—22.

7. Self-abasement, or shame in view of his past life, is the necessary result of those views of his duty and destiny which every Christian obtains, when he becomes the servant of God, v. 12.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTENTS.

The apostle, having shown in the preceding chapter, that the doctrines of grace do not give liberty to sin, but on the contrary are productive of holiness, in this chapter first illustrates and confirms his position that we are not under the law, but under grace, and shows the consequences of this change in our relation to God. While under the law, we brought forth fruit unto sin; when under grace, we bring forth fruit unto righteousness. This occupies the first section, vs. 1—6. The second, vs.

7—25, contains an exhibition of the operation of the law, derived from the apostle's own experience, and designed to show its insufficiency to produce sanctification, as he had before proved it to be insufficient for justification. This section consists of two parts, vs. 7—13, which exhibit the operation of the law in producing conviction of sin; and vs. 14—25, which show that in the inward conflict between sin and holiness, the law cannot afford the believer any relief. His only hope of victory is in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAP. 7: 1—6.

[1]Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? [2]For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. [3]So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. [4]Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. [5]For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. [6]But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

ANALYSIS.

This section is an illustration of the position assumed in v. 14 of the preceding chapter; we are not under law, but under grace. Paul remarks, as a general fact, that the authority of laws is not perpetual, v. 1. For example, the law of marriage binds a woman to her husband only so long as he lives. When he is dead, she is free from the obligation which that law imposed, and is at liberty to marry another man, vs. 2, 3. So we, being free from the law, which was our first husband, are at liberty to marry another, even Christ. We are freed from the law by the death of Christ, v. 4. The fruit of our first marriage was sin, v. 5. The fruit of the second is holiness, v. 6.

The apparent confusion in this passage arises from the apostle's not carrying the figure regularly through. As a woman is free from obligation to her husband by *his* death, so we are free from the law by *its* death, is obviously the illustration intended. But the apostle, out of respect probably to the feelings of his readers, avoids saying the law is dead, but expresses the idea that we are free from it, by saying we are dead to the law by the body of Christ.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *Know ye not brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?* The sentiment of this verse, viz. the obligation of the law is not perpetual, is expressed very generally, and not precisely in the form suited to the illustration which follows. The illustration is, that the law of marriage ceases to bind a woman when her husband is dead; but Paul here says, the law has dominion over a man so long as he lives. The general thought is all that is intended to be here expressed; and this received its form probably before the precise illustration was determined in the apostle's own mind. It is not necessarily to be inferred from the expression, *I speak to them that know the law*, that the Jewish Christians are specially referred to. The principle stated being so familiar, the apostle might assume that any class of his readers knew enough of law to be aware of its truth.

The original leaves it doubtful whether the last clause should be rendered "so long as *he* lives," or "so long as *it* lives." The former rendering is to be preferred, 1. Because the expressions the *law lives*, and the *law dies*, are very unusual, and, in the writings of Paul, unexampled, if the doubtful case in v. 6 be excepted. 2. This interpretation is more consistent with the language of v. 2, "The woman is bound to her husband so long as *he* lives; but if her husband be dead," &c. 3. Throughout the passage it is said that we are dead to the law (v. 4), delivered from the law (v. 6), and not that the law is dead to us.

The word *law*, in this verse, seems to be used generally. It is not the law of Moses, nor the moral law, nor the law of marriage particularly; but the apostle's remark has reference to laws in general. The particular example is given in vs. 2, 3, and the application of the remark to Christians is made in v. 4.

(2) *For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he liveth*, &c. This and the following verse are a simple illustration of the principle stated in v. 1. The word *for*, therefore, has the force which it so often has in such connexions, being equivalent to *for example*. 'Death puts an end to the authority of laws; *for example*, the woman,' &c. *Is bound by the law.* The law here is the law of marriage, and not especially or exclusively the Mosaic law on that subject. *But if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.* "Law of her husband;" i. e. the law which bound her to her husband; or which respects her husband. The words rendered *loosed from* are so used in v. 6. Gal. 5: 4.

(3) *So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress*, &c. This verse is but an amplification of the preceding one. 'While her husband lives, the woman is bound by the law of marriage, for she is an adulteress if, while he is living, she be married to another man; but that his death frees her from

this law is plain, for she is not regarded as an adulteress if, her husband being dead, she be married to another.' Laws, therefore, are not necessarily of perpetual obligation.

(4) *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another*, &c. *Wherefore*, this being the case, i. e. as the woman is freed from the marriage contract by the death of her husband, in like manner ye are free from the law by the death of Christ. And, moreover, as the woman is at liberty to marry the second time, so are we. Freed from the demands of our first husband (the law), we may be married to him who has risen from the dead. That is, freed from the law, as a rule of justification, we are at liberty to accept of the offers of gratuitous acceptance made to us in the gospel. As before remarked, the meaning of the apostle would be rather plainer if, at the beginning of this verse, instead of saying *ye are dead to the law*, he had said *the law is dead to you*. As the woman is freed from her husband when he dies, so are we freed from the law when it is dead, i. e. satisfied. But this is a mode of expression which he seems studiously to avoid. And the idea of our freedom from the law is as well expressed by saying *we are dead to the law*, as by saying *the law is dead to us*. In illustration of the phrase *dead to the law*, see v. 6. ch. 6: 2. Gal. 2: 19. 1 Pet. 2: 24.

We are said to be freed from the law *by the body of Christ*, i. e. by the sacrifice of that body, or by his death. Paul uses the expressions "the blood of Christ," Eph. 2: 13; "his flesh," Eph. 2: 15; "his cross," v. 16; "his body," Col. 1: 22, as all equivalent to "his death." The demands of the law are satisfied by the sufferings of Christ. He has redeemed us from the curse of the law, by bearing its penalty or curse in our place, Gal. 3: 13. To those, therefore, who are in Christ Jesus, the law, as a covenant of works, or rule of justification, is no longer in force, Rom. 8: 2.

That ye should be married to another, to him who is raised from the dead. This clause expresses the design of the redemption just spoken of. We are not delivered from the law, that we should be free from all restraint, or be our own masters, but that we should be united to him through whom alone the original design of the law, the sanctification of men, can be effected. As the apostle had spoken of Christ, by implication at least, as being dead, when he spoke of his body, there was a propriety in his saying *who is raised from the dead.* It is a living husband, to use the apostle's figure, which every believer has in Christ; and, as he ever lives, the union is perpetual; there is to be no more either divorce or death

That we should bring forth fruit unto God. This is the design of our union with Christ. The object, here expressed in a manner suited to the figurative language of the context, is the same which is so often elsewhere stated as the grand design of the redemption of Christ, viz. the sanctification of his people.

The law of which the apostle is here speaking, is evidently not the Mosaic law merely. It is not the doctrine of this, and of similar passages, that Christ has delivered us from the Jewish economy, and left us at liberty to embrace the simpler and more spiritual system of the gospel. The law of which he speaks is that which says, "The man which doeth these things shall live by them," ch. 10: 5. Gal. 3: 10; that is, which requires perfect obedience as the condition of acceptance. It is that which says, "Thou shalt not covet," v. 7; without which sin is dead, v. 8; which is holy, just, and good, v. 12; which is spiritual, v. 14, &c. &c. It is that law by whose works the Gentiles cannot be justified, ch. 3: 20; from whose curse Christ has redeemed not the Jews only, but also the Gentiles, Gal. 3: 13, 14. It is plain, therefore, that Paul here means by the law the will of God, as a rule of duty, no matter how revealed. From this law, as prescribing the terms of our acceptance with God, Christ has delivered us. Since, however, as remarked above (ch. 6: 14), the Old Testament economy, including th Mosaic institutions, was the form in which the law, as law, was ever present to the minds of the apostle and his readers, and since deliverance from the legal system, as such, involved deliverance from that economy, it is not wonderful that reference to that dispensation should often be made; or that Paul should at times express the idea of deliverance from the law, as such, by terms which would seem to express only deliverance from the particular form in which it was so familiar to his readers.

(5) *For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law*, &c. The apostle having, in v. 4, stated that believers are freed from the law by the death of Christ, in this and the following verses he shows the necessity and the consequences of this change. 'We have been thus freed, *because* formerly, when under the law, we brought forth fruit unto death; but now, being free from the law, we are devoted to the service of God.' The force of *for* at the beginning of this verse, is therefore obvious. The former legal state of believers is here described by saying, they *were in the flesh*. In the language of Scripture, the word *flesh* expresses, in such connexions, one or the other of two ideas, or both conjointly. First, a state of moral corruption, as in ch. 8: 8, "Those that are in the flesh;" secondly, a carnal state, i. e. a state in which men are subject to external rites, ceremonies, and commands; or, more generally, a legal state, inasmuch as among the Jews, that state was one of subjection to such external rites. Gal. 3: 3, "Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Compare Gal. 4: 9, where the expression "weak and beggarly elements" is substituted for the phrase "the flesh," see Rom. 4: 1. In the present case, both ideas appear to be included. The meaning is, 'When in your unrenewed and legal state.' The opposite condition is described (v. 6) as a state of freedom from the law; which, of course, shows that the second of the two ideas mentioned

above, was prominent in the apostle's mind when he used the words "in the flesh."

The motions of sins, i. e. emotions or exercises of sin, for sinful feelings. *Which were by the law.* The obvious ellipsis in this clause may be variously supplied. 'Which are *made known* by the law,' according to ch. 3: 20; or 'which are *caused to abound* by the law,' according to ch. 5: 20; or, 'which are produced by the law,' according to v. 8, of this chapter. The last mode of explanation is decidedly to be preferred, because more consistent with the context, and with Paul's object, which required him to show that the law, instead of producing holiness, was incidentally the cause of sin.

Did work in our members to bring forth sin unto death. In our members is little more than a paraphrase for *in us;* see ch. 6: 12, 13. *To bring forth.* The infinitive here expresses the result; 'Sin so wrought that we brought forth fruit,' &c. *Fruit unto death.* Death is here again personified; *to death*, the advantage of death; as opposed to the words *to God*, at the close of v. 4. The fruit which sin produced belonged, as it were, to death. Such was our condition when under the law. Our present state is described in the next verse.

(6) *But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead; wherein we were held*, &c. Our former state was one in *the flesh;* our present is one of *freedom from the law.* If the common reading be adopted, the meaning of this passage is, 'We are delivered from the law, *it* being dead,' &c. But the true reading requires the second clause to be rendered thus, *we being dead.* The meaning then is, 'We are now delivered from the law, being dead in respect to that by which we were formerly held,' &c. There is apparently a transposition of the members of the sentence; their natural order seems to be this, 'But now, being dead as it respects the law, by which we were formerly held, we are free, so that,' &c.

That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter. The result of deliverance from the law is here described. The phrases *newness of spirit*, and *oldness of the letter*, according to a common Hebrew idiom, mean *a new spirit* and *old letter.* The word rendered *letter* means something written; then the law as written, or the written law; ch. 2: 27. 2 Cor. 3: 6, "ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit (i. e. not of the law, but of gospel); for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life;" i. e. the law condemns, but the gospel secures life. The sense of this passage, therefore, is, 'We serve God in the exercise of a new spirit, or in a new spiritual state; and not in bondage to the old written law, or in our old legal state.' It is evident that the clause *in the oldness of the letter* is substituted by the apostle for the expressions *under the law* and *in the flesh;* all which he uses to describe the legal and corrupt condition of men, prior to the believing reception of the gospel. Believers, then, are free from the law by the death of Christ; they are no longer under the old covenant which said, "Do this, and live;" bu

are introduced into a new and gracious state, in which they are accepted, not for what they do, but for what has been done for them. Instead of having the legal and slavish spirit, which arose from their former relation to God, they have the feelings of children.

DOCTRINES.

1. The leading doctrine of this section is that taught in v. 14 of the preceding chapter, viz. that believers are not under a legal system; and that the consequence of their freedom is not the indulgence of sin, but the service of God, v. 4.

2. This deliverance from the law is not effected by setting the law aside, or by disregarding its demands; but by those demands being satisfied in the person of Christ, v. 4. ch. 10: 4.

3. As far as we are concerned, redemption is in order to holiness. We are delivered from the law that we may be united to Christ, and we are united to Christ, that we may bring forth fruit unto God, v. 4, &c.

4. Legal or self-righteous strivings after holiness can never be successful. The relation in which they suppose the soul to stand to God, is, from its nature, productive of evil, and not of holy feelings, v. 5.

5. Actual freedom from the bondage and penalty of the law, is always attended and manifested by a filial temper and obedience, v. 6.

6. The doctrine concerning marriage, which is here incidentally taught, or rather which is assumed as known to Jews and Christians, is, that the marriage contract can only be dissolved by death. The only exception to this rule is given by Christ, Matt. 5: 32; unless indeed Paul, in 1 Cor. 7: 15, recognises wilful and final desertion as a sufficient ground of divorce, vs. 2, 3.

REMARKS.

1. As the only way in which we can obtain deliverance from the law is by the death of Christ, the exercise of faith in him is essential to holiness. When we lose our confidence in Christ, we fall under the power of the law, and relapse into sin. Every thing depends, therefore, upon our maintaining our union with Christ. "Without me, ye can do nothing," v. 4.

2. The only evidence of union with Christ is bringing forth fruit unto God, v. 4.

3. As deliverance from the penalty of the law is in order to holiness, it is vain to expect that deliverance, except with a view to the end for which it is granted, v. 4.

4. Conversion is a great change; sensible to him that experiences it, and visible to others. It is a change from a legal and slavish state, to one of filial confidence; manifesting itself by the renunciation of the service of sin, and by devotion to the service of God, v. 6.

5. A contract so lasting as that of marriage, and of which the con-

sequences are so important, should not be entered into lightly, but in the fear of God, vs. 2, 3.

6. The practice, common in many of the Protestant countries of Europe, and in many states of this Union, of granting divorces on the ground of cruel treatment, or, 'incompatibility of temper,' is in direct contravention of the doctrines and precepts of the Bible on this subject, vs. 2, 3.

CHAP. 7: 7—13.

7 What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead. 9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*. 12 Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

ANALYSIS.

Paul, having shown that we must be delivered from the law in order to our justification (chs. 3, 4), and that this freedom was no less necessary in order to sanctification (ch. 6. ch. 7: 1—6), comes now to explain more fully than he had previously done, what was the use and effect of the law. This is the object of the residue of this chapter. The apostle shows first, vs. 7—13, that the law produces conviction of sin, agreeably to his declaration in ch. 3: 20; and, secondly, vs. 14—25, that it enlightens the believer's conscience, but cannot destroy the dominion of sin. This, section, therefore, may be advantageously divided into two parts. Paul introduces the subject, as is usual with him, by means of an idea intimately associated with the preceding discussion. He had been insisting on the necessity of deliverance from the law. Why? Because it is evil? No; but because it cannot produce holiness. It can produce only the knowledge and the sense of sin; which are the constituents of genuine conviction. These two effects are attributed to the operation of the law, the former in v. 7, the latter in v. 8. These ideas are amplified in vs. 9, 10, 11. The inference is drawn in v. 12, that the law is good; and in v. 13, that the evil which it incidentally produces is to be attributed to sin, the exceeding turpitude of which becomes thus the more apparent.

COMMENTARY.

(7) *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Far from it*, &c. The apostle asks whether it is to be inferred, either from the general doctrine of the preceding section, respecting the necessity of deliverance from the law, or from the special declaration made in v. 5, respecting the law's producing sin, that the law was itself evil? He answers, by no means; and shows, in the next verse, that the effect ascribed to the law, in v. 5, is merely incidental. *Is the law sin?* means either, Is the law evil? or is it the cause of sin; see Micah 1: 5, 'Samaria is the sin of Jacob.' The former is best suited to the context, because Paul admits that the law is incidentally productive of sin.

Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law. The word rendered *nay* very often signifies *on the contrary*, and may be so translated here. 'So far from the law being evil, it is, on the contrary, of the greatest use, for I had not known sin, but by the law.' *I had not known sin.* The will of God, which is the rule of right and wrong, is the source of all knowledge of what is morally good or evil. This law is revealed partially in the very constitution of our nature; and more fully in the Scriptures. The more enlarged and spiritual our views of this law, the clearer our knowledge of the extent and evil of sin.

For I had not known lust, except the law had said thou shall not covet. The meaning of this member of the sentence depends upon the sense given to *for*. It may be confirmatory, or merely illustrative. If the former, the sense is, 'I had not known sin, but by the law, *for* I had not known that the mere inward desire was evil, had not the law said,' &c. Or retaining the same force of this particle, 'I had not known the real inward fountain of sin, viz. concupiscence, except the law had said,' &c. According to this view, which is the one most commonly adopted, the word rendered *lust* refers to the corrupt disposition of the heart, considered as the root or source of sin. If *for* (γάρ) be considered as merely illustrative, the sense is this: 'I had not known sin except by the law; *for example*, I had not known concupiscence, had not the law said,' &c. According to this view, concupiscence does not differ from the more general term *sin*, except as being adduced as an example of the evils to the knowledge of which the law leads. It seems probable that the first interpretation is the more correct of the two. At least, that the apostle designedly referred to an inward, spiritual sin, in order the more clearly to confirm his declaration. That certain outward actions were wrong, he and all other Pharisees knew, and were ready to admit; but that God took cognizance of the heart, and of its most secret workings, and even of its *habits* or dispositions, they were less disposed to imagine; and were, therefore, deplorably ignorant of the extent and turpitude of their depravity in his sight.

(8) *But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence*, &c. This verse is not to be connected logically

with the last member of the preceding one. It is rather co-ordinate with it, and is a virtual answer to the question, Is the law evil? To this question Paul replies, in v. 7, No; on the contrary, it leads to the knowledge of sin. And then in v. 8, he adds, it is not evil in itself, although incidentally the cause of sin in us. *Sin*, in this passage, must mean the sinful disposition of the heart, or *our corrupt nature*, because it is said to produce all kinds of concupiscence; that is, every kind of evil desire. These desires are the fruit and evidence of this corrupt state of the heart. *Taking occasion.* The word rendered *occasion* is used for any thing which affords an advantage for the performance of any thing else. The word *occasion* or *opportunity*, referring properly to mere fitness of time, is not so appropriate a translation as the more general term *advantage.*

The words *by the commandment* may be connected either with the preceding or the following clause. If the former mode of construction be adopted, the passage means, 'Sin, taking advantage of the commandment, wrought in me,' &c. If the latter, 'Sin, taking advantage, by the commandment wrought in me,' &c. Our version is commonly pointed according to the former method, with a comma after *commandment.* The original, however, is in favour of the latter; and so is the context. Paul's object is to show that *by the law* sin is excited and aroused; and, in the following verses, he uses similar expressions, as "by it slew me," v. 11; "working death in me by that which is good," v. 13. The apostle, therefore, teaches, that the effect of the law operating upon our corrupt hearts, is to arouse their evil passions, and to lead to the desire of the very object which the law forbids. This is a matter of universal experience. The same sentiment is, therefore, often met with in profane writers. 'We strive for what is forbidden, and desire what is denied,' has become a proverb.

For without the law, sin was *dead.* To say that a thing is dead, is to say that it is inactive, unproductive and unobserved. All this may be said of sin prior to the operation of the law. It is comparatively inoperative and unknown until aroused and brought to light by the law. There are two effects of the law included in this declaration, the excitement of evil passions, and the discovery of them. Calvin makes the latter much the more prominent. But the context, and the analogous declarations in the succeeding verses, seem to require the former to be considered as the most important. The law, then, is not evil, but it produces the conviction of sin, by teaching us what sin is, v. 7, and by making us conscious of the existence and power of this evil in our own hearts, v. 8.

In the following verses, 9—11, we find an amplification and confirmation of the sentiment of vs. 7, 8, showing more fully the operation of the law. Paul is here describing his own experience. This is obvious, not only because he uses the first person singular throughout the passage, but because the exercises here detailed are more or less distinctly those of every true Christian; and, consequently those of the apostle. Paul describes, in figurative language, his state before the operation of the law

upon his mind, and after it began to produce its proper effect. In the former state, he was alive, and sin was dead; in the latter, sin became alive, and he died.

(9) *For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.* The word *for* connects this verse logically with the two preceding. 'The law produces conviction of sin, *for* I was alive,' &c. *Without the law*, i. e. the law being absent, as it is opposed to the expression, *when the commandment came.* This phrase describes the state of Paul, and of every Christian, before conviction of sin. He was without a proper apprehension of the nature and extent of the law, which is real ignorance of it. Of course, as the law is the rule of duty, he was unaware of the number and magnitude of his sins. In this state he was alive. *Life* is a common figure, not only for activity, but happiness, including, among other ideas, those of peace and security. The meaning here is, 'I was at peace with myself; unaware of the dreadful opposition of my heart to the nature and requirements of God; and consequently unapprehensive of the danger to which, by that opposition, I was exposed.'

But when the commandment came, &c. That is, when I obtained proper views of the nature and extent of the law, then two consequences followed, sin revived, and I died. As by sin's being dead was meant that it was inactive and unobserved, so by its reviving must be intended, that it was roused from its torpor; its opposition to all that is good was excited by the clear exhibition of the law, and consequently it was no longer an unobserved or unknown evil. The sense of its existence power, and turpitude, became clear and strong. The result of this effect of the law Paul expresses by saying, *and I died.* That is, 'I became miserable; because aware of the evil that was in me, and of the danger to which I was exposed.' Self-satisfaction and sense of security fled before the light of the law.

(10) *And the commandment which was unto life, I found to be unto death.* Life and death are here, as often elsewhere, opposed to each other; the one standing for happiness, the other for misery. The commandment, which was designed and adapted to lead men to happiness and the true end of their being, becomes productive of misery, by making them sensible of their corruption and exposure to condemnation. Throughout the whole of this passage it is to be remembered that Paul attributes to the law, not only the knowledge of sin, but the excitement of it. It produces "the motions of sin," or sinful desires, v. 5; it works all manner of concupiscence, v. 8; it revives sin, v. 9; it seduces into sin, v. 11. In the death, therefore, which it produces, the idea of sin as well as misery is to be included; and in the life, to which it was designed to lead, the ideas of holiness and happiness are both embraced.

(11) *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.* This verse assigns the reason of the law's being the cause of death, and hence is connected by *for* with v. 10. The proper

pointing of this passage is doubtful. In our version it is commonly pointed thus, "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me," &c. But, for the reasons assigned on v. 8, the words *by the commandment* should be connected with the subsequent rather than with the antecedent clause. It was by the commandment that sin deceived, &c. The law is therefore the cause of death, not directly, or in virtue of its own nature or tendency, but incidentally only. Sin makes it such; for the evil disposition of the heart avails itself even of the law to lead us into sin. The word rendered *to deceive*, means also *to seduce;* which sense is better suited to this passage. The idea, therefore, is the same as that before expressed, 'our corrupt hearts make even the law the means of causing us to sin.' *And by it slew me*, i. e. rendered me miserable, at once unholy and unhappy. 'It made me sensible that I was sunk in hopeless corruption and ruin.'

(12) *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good.* The conclusion from the foregoing exhibition of the effect of the law is, that it is not to be blamed for the evil which it incidentally produces. In v. 9 Paul uses the words *law* and *commandment* as perfectly synonymous; here they are distinguished. The law collectively, and each command separately, are alike holy, &c. The word *holy*, in the first clause, expresses general excellence, freedom from all fault; and contains all that is expressed by the three terms of the second clause, where *holy* means pure, *just* means reasonable, and *good*, benevolent, or tending to happiness. The law is in every way excellent.

(13) *Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid*, &c. With a view to prevent the possibility of its being supposed that he thought disrespectfully of this holy law of God, the apostle again denies that it is directly the cause of sin, but shows that our own corruption is the real source of the evil. *Made death*, agreeably to what has been said above, means 'made the cause of sin and misery.' The law is not this cause.

But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. The grammatical construction of this part of the verse is, in the original, very doubtful, and, in our version, inaccurate. It will be observed that it consists of two clauses, each beginning with *that;* "that it might appear" and "that it might become." The latter of these clauses may depend upon the former; and the participle *working* be taken Hebraically for a verb. The sense is then plain and good. 'The law is not the cause of death, but sin, that it might appear sin, wrought death in me by that which is good; that thus it might become exceeding sinful.' This, however, does violence to the text, as the participle cannot properly be taken here as a verb. Others, therefore, make the clauses co-ordinate, both depending upon the first words of the sentence. 'The law is not the cause of death, but sin *is*, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; *that is*, that it might become exceeding sin

ful,' &c. *That it might appear working*, i. e. might be apprehended in its true character from its effects. Sin, therefore, and not the law, is the cause of death. And the turpitude and enormity of sin are made the more conspicuous by the law, inasmuch as it makes even that which is in itself good a source of evil.

DOCTRINES.

1. The law, although it cannot secure either the justification or sanctification of men, answers an essential part in the economy of salvation. It enlightens conscience and secures its verdict against a multitude of evils, which we should not otherwise have recognised as sins. It, therefore, produces that state of mind which is a necessary preparation for the reception of the gospel, vs. 7, 8.

2. Conviction of sin, that is, an adequate knowledge of its nature, and a sense of its power over us, is an indispensable part of evangelical religion. Before the gospel can be embraced as a means of deliverance from sin, we must feel that we are involved in corruption and misery, v. 9.

3. The law of God is a transcript of his own nature; holy, just, and good. The clearer our views of its extent and excellence, the deeper will be our sense of our own unworthiness, vs. 9, 12.

4. Sin is exceeding sinful. Its turpitude is manifested by the fact that the exhibition of holiness rouses it into opposition; and that the holy law itself is made incidentally to increase its virulence and power, v. 13.

5. Sin is very deadly. It extracts death from the means of life, and cannot exist unattended by misery, vs. 10—13.

REMARKS.

1. How miserable the condition of those whose religion is all law! vs. 7—13.

2. Though the law cannot save us, it must prepare us for salvation. It should, therefore, be carefully and faithfully preached, both in its extent and authority, vs. 7, 8.

3. It must be wrong and productive of evil, so to describe the nature of evangelical religion, as to make the impression that it is a mere change in the main object of pursuit; the choice of one source of happiness in preference to another. It is a return to God, through Jesus Christ, for the purpose of being delivered from sin and devoted to his service. Its first step is the conviction that we are sinners, and, as such, dead, i. e. helpless, corrupt, and miserable, vs. 7, 13.

4. Nothing is more inconsistent with true religion than self-complacency. Because the more holy we are, the clearer our views of God's law; and the clearer our views of the law, the deeper our sense of sin and, consequently, the greater must be our humility, vs. 12, 13.

5. If our religious experience does not correspond with that of the

people of God, as detailed in the Scriptures, we cannot be true Christians. Unless we have felt as Paul felt, we have not the religion of Paul, and cannot expect to share his reward, vs. 7—13.

CHAP. 7: 14—25.

14For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. 17Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. 19For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

ANALYSIS.

The apostle, having exhibited the operation of the law in producing conviction of sin, comes now to show its effect on the mind of the believer. It cannot secure his sanctification. The cause of this inability is not in the evil nature of the law, which is spiritual, v. 14; but in the power of indwelling sin, "I am carnal," says the apostle, "sold under sin," v. 14. As this is not only a strong, but an ambiguous expression, Paul immediately explains his meaning. He does not intend to say that he was given up to the willing service of sin; but that he was in the condition of a slave, whose acts are not always the evidence of his inclination. His will may be one way, but his master may direct him another. So it is with the believer. He does what he hates, and omits to do what he approves, v. 15. This is a description of slavery, and a clear explanation of what is intended by the expression "sold under sin." There are two obvious inferences to be drawn from this fact. The one is, that the believer, while denying the sufficiency of the law, and maintaining the necessity of deliverance from it, bears an inward testimony to its excellence. He feels and admits that the law is good, v. 16; for it is the law which he approves, and the transgression of it which he hates as stated in the preceding verse. The second inference is, that acts thus performed are not the true criterion of character. "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me," v. 17. The acts of a

slave are indeed his own acts, but not being performed with the full assent and consent of his soul, they are not fair tests of the real state of his feelings. The propriety and truth of this representation of the state of the believer, and of the influence of the law, is reasserted and confirmed in vs. 18—20. The law presents duty clearly; the heart and conscience of the believer assent to its excellence; but what can the law do in destroying the power of our inward corruptions? These evil principles remain, as far as the law is concerned, in full force. The authoritative declaration that a thing must not be done, does not destroy the inclination to do it.

The result, therefore, is, that notwithstanding the assent of the mind to the excellence of the law, the power of sin remains, so that, when we would do good, evil is present with us, v. 21. We delight in the law after the inward man, but this does not destroy the power of sin in our members, vs. 22, 23. This inward conflict the law can never end. It only makes us sensible of our helpless and degraded condition, v. 24; and drives us to seek victory whence alone it can be obtained, i. e. as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, v. 25.

COMMENTARY.

(14) *For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.* The connexion between this verse and the preceding passage seems to be this. It had been asserted, in v. 5, that the law was incidentally the cause of sin. The result, however, was no reflection on the law; for it was holy, just, and good, v. 12. As the fact that the law excites sin is consistent with its being good, so is also the fact that it cannot destroy the power of sin. The law indeed is spiritual, but we are carnal. The fault is again in us. According to this view, *for*, at the beginning of this verse, is rather a particle of transition, or, at most, of illustration; and not of confirmation or inference. Paul, according to our version, says, *We know;* the original, however, admits of the rendering *I know indeed;* which is more consistent with the use of the first person singular throughout the chapter. The former reading is commonly adopted.

The law is spiritual. The word spiritual is here expressive of general excellence, and includes all that is meant by holy, just, and good, in v. 12. This use of the word is easily accounted for. The Spirit of God is the source of all excellence; hence, the term *spiritual*, when applied to any thing of which he is the author, implies that it derives its nature and character from the Spirit. *Carnal*, on the other hand, is applied to any thing which derives its nature and character from the flesh. Hence, "things of the Spirit," "fruits of the Spirit," &c., are good things, or good fruits, ch. 8: 5. Gal. 5: 22; and "things of the flesh," "works of the flesh," &c., are evil works. As it is the doctrine of the Scriptures that men are entirely depraved, or destitute of holiness, in their natural state, the word *flesh*, which is the scriptural designation of men (as in

the frequent expressions, "all flesh," "no flesh living," &c.), is used for that which is corrupt, or for human nature considered apart from divine influence, ch. 8: 1—11. John 3: 5, 6, and other passages, too numerous to be cited. To be carnal, therefore, when spoken of men, means to be under the government of the flesh, or of natural principles merely; and to be spiritual is to be under the government of the Spirit. When spoken of things, to be *carnal* is to be corrupt; to be *spiritual* is to be holy or excellent. The law is thus excellent. It is an emanation from the Spirit of God; a transcript of his nature, and of course partakes of his character. But we are carnal, under the government of a corrupt nature. There is, therefore, a necessary opposition between the character and requirements of the law and our hearts. This, and not any evil in the law, is the true reason why the law cannot effect our deliverance from sin. The evil is too deep to be destroyed by the mere objective presentation of excellence.

Sold under sin, that is, a slave to sin. As slaves were procured by purchase, a person sold to another was his slave. The expression in the text is ambiguous. It may mean that one is entirely devoted to the service of sin, as in v. 7 of the preceding chapter. In this sense it is entirely inapplicable to the Christian. Paul says, expressly, the believer is in this sense no longer the servant (Gr. slave) of sin, but the servant of righteousness. The phrase in question, however, may also mean that one is subject to a power which, of himself, he cannot resist; against which he may and does struggle, and from which he desires to be free; but which, notwithstanding all his efforts, still asserts its authority. This is a state of bondage. It is in this sense that Paul says he was sold under sin. This appears clearly from the following verses, which are explanatory of this clause.

(15) *For that which I do, I allow not*, &c. This is an explanation and confirmation of the preceding declaration. 'I am sold under sin, *for* that which I do, I allow not,' &c. The original word, rendered *I allow*, properly signifies *I know*, and as it is used in different senses in the Scriptures, its meaning in this case is a matter of doubt. Retaining its ordinary sense, the word may be used here popularly, as in the common phrase, 'I know not what I do,' expressive of the absence of a calm and deliberate purpose, and of the violence of the impulse under which one acts. Or the meaning may be that what is done, is done thoughtlessly. As, however, the word often expresses the idea of approbation, the interpretation best suited to the context is, 'What I do, that I approve not;' compare Ps. 1: 6, "The Lord knoweth (i. e. approves) the way of the righteous;" Ps. 36: 10. 1 Cor. 8: 3, &c.

For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. This is a further description of this state of bondage. As the expressions *what I would* and *what I hate* are in antithesis, the former must mean what I love or delight in. This use of the Greek word is accommodated to the corresponding Hebrew term, and occurs several times in the

New Testament. Matt. 27 : 43, "Let him deliver him, if he will have him, i. e. if he delights in him;" Matt. 9 : 13. 12 : 7. Heb. 10 : 5, 8, and Ps. 21 : 9. 39 : 7, in the Septuagint. The word *will*, therefore, does not express so much a mere determination of the mind, as a state of the feelings and judgment. 'What I love and approve, that I omit; what I hate and disapprove, that I do.' Whether the conflict here described is that which, in a greater or less degree, exists in every man, between the natural authoritative sense of right and wrong, and his corrupt inclinations; or whether it is peculiar to the Christian, must be decided by considerations drawn from the whole description, and from the connexion of this passage with the preceding and succeeding portions of the apostle's discourse. It is enough to remark here, that every Christian can adopt the language of this verse.

Two consequences flow from this representation of the experience of the Christian. First, the fault is felt and acknowledged to be his own; the law is not to be blamed, v. 16. Second, this state of feeling is consistent with his being a Christian, v. 17.

(16) *If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.* Paul here asserts that his acting contrary to the law was no evidence that he thought the law evil; for what he did, he disapproved. But to disapprove and condemn what the law forbids, is to assent to the excellence of the law. There is a constant feeling of self-disapprobation, and a sense of the excellence of the law in the Christian's mind. He is, therefore, never disposed to blame the extent or severity of the law, but admits the fault to be in himself. *I consent to*, literally, I speak with, agree with, concede to.

(17) *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. Now then*, that is, under these circumstances, or, this being the case. Or the meaning may be *but now*, i. e. since I became a Christian. The former explanation is to be preferred on account of the connexion of this verse with v. 15, from which this passage is an inference. 'If the case be so, that I am sold under sin and am its unwilling slave; if I do what I disapprove, and fail to accomplish what I love; it is clear that it is not properly and fully I that do it, my real self; my better feelings or renovated nature is opposed to what the law forbids.' This is not said as an exculpation, but to exhibit the extent and power of indwelling sin, which it is beyond our own power, and beyond the power of the law, to eradicate or effectually control. This feeling of helplessness is not only consistent with a sense and acknowledgment of accountability, but is always found united with genuine self-condemnation and penitence. The apostle's object, therefore, is not to apologize for sin, but to show that the experience detailed in v. 15 is consistent with his being a Christian. 'If it is true that I really approve and love the law, and desire to be conformed to it, I am no longer the willing slave of sin; to the depth and power of the original evil is to be attributed the fact that I am not entirely delivered from its influence.'

(18, 19, 20) These verses contain an amplification and confirmation of the sentiment of the preceding verses. They reassert the existence and explain the nature of the inward struggle of which the apostle had been speaking. 'I am unable to come up to the requirements of the law, not because they are unreasonable, but because I am corrupt; there is no good in me. I can approve and delight in the exhibitions of holiness made by the law, but full conformity to its demands is more than I can attain. It is not I, therefore, my real and lasting self, but this intrusive tyrant dwelling within me, that disobeys the law.' This strong and expressive language, though susceptible of a literal interpretation, which would make it teach not only error but nonsense, is still perfectly perspicuous and correct, because accurately descriptive of the common feelings of men. Paul frequently employs similar modes of expression. When speaking of his apostolic labours he says, "Yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me," 1 Cor. 15: 10. And in Gal. 2: 20 he says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." As no one supposes that the labours and life here spoken of were not the labours and life of the apostle, or that they did not constitute and express his moral character; so no Christian supposes that the greatness and power of his sin frees him from its responsibility, even when he expresses his helpless misery by saying, with the apostle, "It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me."

(18) *For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing*, &c. Paul is here explaining how it is that there is such a contradiction between his better principles and his conduct, as just described. The reason is, that in himself, he was entirely depraved, "In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." As Paul is here speaking of himself, he limits the declaration that there was no good in him. In its full sense, as he was a renewed man, this could not be true; he therefore adds, "in my flesh." Agreeably to the explanation given above, v. 14, these words evidently mean, 'in my nature considered apart from divine influence,' i. e. 'in me viewed independently of the effects produced by the Spirit of God.'

For to will is present with me, but to perform that which is good I find not. To will indeed. As *will* is here opposed to *performance*, it must have a somewhat different sense from that which it has in v. 15, where it is opposed to the word *to hate*. There it means to approve or love; here it means to purpose or desire. 'I have the purpose or desire to obey the law, but the performance I find not.' *I find not*, i. e. I do not find to be present; I cannot attain.

(19) *For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do.* This is a repetition, nearly in the same words, of v. 15. Paul reasserts that he was unable to act up to his purpose and desires. For example, he doubtless desired to love God with all his heart and at all times; but how constantly was his love colder, and less operative than the law demands. This verse is, therefore, but an amplification of

the last clause of v. 18. *I would*, means either *I approve* or *love*, as in v. 15; or *I purpose*, as in v. 18.

(20) *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* The same conclusion from the same premises as in v. 17. 'The things which I do, when contrary to the characteristic desires and purposes of my heart, are to be considered as the acts of a slave. They are indeed my own acts, but not being performed with the full and joyful purpose of the heart, are not to be regarded as a fair criterion of character.'

(21) *I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.* This verse has been subjected to a greater variety of interpretations than any other in the chapter, or perhaps in the whole epistle. The construction in the original is doubtful; and besides this difficulty, there is no little uncertainty as to the sense in which the word *law* is to be here taken. The question is, whether Paul means the law of God, of which he has been speaking throughout the chapter, or whether he uses the word in a new sense, for a rule, course, or law of action. Our translators have assumed the latter. If the former sense of the word be preferred, the passage may be thus interpreted. 'I find, therefore, that to me wishing to act according to the law, i. e. to do good, evil is present with me.' The considerations, however, in favour of the second explanation of the word *law* appear to be decisive. 1. The other interpretation does not afford a sense suited to the context, as appears from Paul's own explanation of his meaning in the following verses. 'I find,' he says, 'this law, that while wishing to do good, I do evil, v. 21; that is, I find that while I delight in the law of God, after the inward man, there is another law in my members which causes me to sin,' vs. 22, 23. Here it is evident, that the apostle means to explain what he intended by saying in v. 21, that he found or experienced a law which caused him to go counter to his better judgment and desires. 2. Having used the word law by itself for the divine law throughout the chapter, he, for the first time, in v. 22, calls it "the law of God," to mark the distinction between the law intended in v. 21, and that intended in v. 22. 3. This sense of the word is not unusual, it occurs repeatedly in the immediately succeeding verses.

The meaning of the verse is, 'I find, therefore, this law, that to me wishing to do good, evil is present.' This passage thus expresses the result at which the apostle had arrived. There was this inward conflict in his mind between good and evil which the law could not terminate. He found, that while wishing to do good, he was still subject to evil, and from this subjection nothing but the grace of God could deliver him. This is more fully explained in the following verses.

(22) *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man*, &c. In the preceding verse Paul had said, "I would do good;" the same desire after conformity to the requisitions of God is here expressed with more distinctness. *I delight in the law* is a stronger expression than

I consent to it, v. 16. As *I*, in the language of the apostle, includes, as it were, two persons, the new and the old man, the flesh and the spirit, it is necessary to limit the proposition whether he says, "In me there is no good thing," or "I delight in the law of God." The former was true only *as to his flesh;* the latter only as to his *inward man.* That this phrase is here expressive of real complacency and delight in the divine excellence as exhibited in the law, seems evident from the following reasons. 1. Because the delight is restricted to the *inward man*, and not spoken of the soul generally. As the term *inward man* meant at first the soul in opposition to the body, and as the former is superior to the latter, it naturally became expressive of excellence, and when opposed to something in the soul, indicates its renewed or better feelings. 2. When the Bible makes this opposition between a good and evil principle in man, it uniformly attributes the former to the Holy Spirit, especially when any one is spoken of as hating evil and rejoicing in God. 3. A comparison of the terms "inward man," "law of the mind," "the new man," "the Spirit," as opposed to "the law in the members," "the old man," "the flesh," shows that the former are all employed to designate holy feelings, or the soul considered as renewed; and the latter the reverse. This is peculiarly obvious from what is said in v. 25, where "the flesh," is opposed to "the law of the mind." 4. What is here said of the "inward man" and "the law in the members," is elsewhere said of "the Spirit" and "the flesh." The conflict which is described here, is described also in ch. 8: 13. Gal. 5: 17. Col. 3: 9, 10; precisely the same things are predicated of the evil principle in all these cases, especially in the passage in Galatians. If, therefore, the contest between "the flesh and Spirit" is peculiar to the renewed man, so is also that of which Paul speaks in this chapter.

(23) *But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind*, &c. *Another*, i. e. other than the "inward man" or "law of the mind." With the one he delighted in the law of God, with the other he was opposed to it. These principles war against each other; exactly as in Gal. 5: 17, the flesh and spirit are represented as being contrary the one to the other, so that we cannot do the things that we would. This law is said to be *in my members*, i. e. in me; compare ch. 6: 13, 19. As he had spoken of the good principle as "the inward man," it was natural to speak of the evil principle as being *outward. In my members*, therefore, is equivalent to "in my flesh," in my unsanctified nature. What in vs. 17, 20 is ascribed to 'indwelling sin,' is here attributed to 'the law in the members.' The latter is, therefore, but a figurative expression of the same idea. This evil is called a law from its controlling influence; it regulates the conduct as though it had a right to do so. The *law of the mind* is evidently but another expression for the "inward man." This form of expression was adopted from its natural opposition to the phrase "law in the members."

Bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.

The law in my members brings me into captivity to the law of sin; that is, to itself. The form of expression is rather unusual, although the sense appears sufficiently plain from the context. There does not seem to be any adequate reason for making a distinction between "the law in the members" and "the law of sin;" the latter designation is rather explanatory of the former. Indwelling sin wars against the renewed principle, and brings the soul into captivity to itself. This, therefore, is but another form of expressing the idea that he was sold under sin, was its unwilling and unhappy captive, constantly resisting its power and longing for deliverance from its tyranny. Hence the exclamation,

(24) *O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death.* The expression *body of this death* has been very variously explained. It may be equivalent to *this body of death*, by a very common Hebraism, according to which the pronoun, which properly belongs to the governing word, is attached to the word governed; as *idols of his silver*, *mountain of his holiness*, for *his idols of silver*, &c. "This body of death" may then mean, this body which is destined or obnoxious to death, i. e. this mortal body. But it is clearly foreign from the spirit of this passage to consider the apostle as here wishing for deliverance from the body. He had been speaking of the burden of sin, and it is from this burden that he longs to be delivered. *Body of death* is, therefore, better understood as 'body which causes death;' and *body* may then be taken for *flesh*, i. e. corrupt nature, which, however, is contrary to usage; or it may be taken metaphorically for sin considered as a body. This is the more natural, as Paul had just spoken of "members" and of sin as something "outward," in contrast to the "inward man." The meaning then is, 'Who will deliver me from this body, i. e. mass of death, this weight which tends to death.' This strong expression of the hatefulness of sin, and of earnest desire to be delivered from it, seems to be clearly descriptive of the exercises of a renewed mind.

(25) The burden of sin being the great evil under which the apostle and all other believers labour, from which no efficacy of the law, and no efforts of their own can deliver them, their case would be entirely hopeless but for help from on high. "Sin shall not have dominion over you," is the language of the grace of God in the gospel. The conflict which the believer sustains is not to result in the victory of sin, but in the triumph of grace. In view of this certain and glorious result, Paul exclaims, *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* This is evidently the expression of a strong and sudden emotion of gratitude. As, however, his object is to illustrate the operation of the law, it would be foreign to his purpose to expatiate on a deliverance effected by a different power; he, therefore, does not follow up the idea suggested by this exclamation, but immediately returns to the point in hand.

So then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin. *Mind* and *flesh* are here opposed. As the latter, according to the constant usage of the apostle, signifies that which is cor-

rupt in man, his unsanctified nature; the former must mean here, as in v. 23, that nature as renewed. In every believer, and in no one else, there are these two principles, grace and sin, the flesh and spirit, the law in the members and the law in the mind; these are contrary the one to the other. '*I myself*,' says the apostle, or 'I one and the same man, feel both of these principles within me. With the one, I serve the law of God; with the other, the law of sin, that is, sin itself, which, as a law in my members, essays to control my conduct.' This, in few words, is the sum of what the apostle has said from v. 14. Such is the state in which the law leaves the believer; such the effect of the mere objective and preceptive presentation of truth. The law excites in the unrenewed mind opposition and hatred; in the pious mind complacency and delight; but in neither case can it break the power of sin, or introduce the soul into the true liberty of the children of God.

DOCTRINES.

1. No man is perfectly holy in this life, at least the apostle was not, according to his own confession, when he wrote this account of his experience. That Paul throughout the latter part of this chapter is describing his own feelings when writing, appears evident from the following considerations.

a. Because he uses the first person and the present tense throughout the passage, and says, "I consent to the law that it is good;" "I delight in the law of God;" "I see another law in my members;" "O wretched man that I am;" "So then I myself serve the law of God;" &c. &c. He does this with an earnestness and warmth which show that he is expressing the feelings of his own heart. No example is to be found in all the apostle's writings analogous to this, if it be assumed that he is here personating another.

b. Because there is nothing in this passage inconsistent with the experience of the holiest of men. This has been shown in the commentary. The inward conflict here described every Christian understands and experiences.

c. The passage contains many declarations inconsistent with the scriptural account of unrenewed men. The Bible does not speak of unrenewed men as consenting to the law, as hating sin and struggling against it, groaning under it as a tyrant's yoke, as delighting in the law of God, and doing all this as to the inward or new man.

d. Because the conflict which is here described is, in other passages, portrayed (for example, in Gal. 5: 17) in language which, by common consent, can be applied only to true Christians. That these passages refer to the same subject is plain not only from the fact that the flesh (or corrupt nature) is mentioned in both as the evil principle, but because the description in both cases is nearly in the same words. There the flesh is said to war against the spirit, so that we cannot do the things that we would; here the flesh or the law in the members is said to war against the law in

the mind, so as to bring us into captivity to the law of sin. If therefore the one passage is descriptive of the experience of the true Christian, so must also the other be.

e. The context requires this interpretation. The apostle has been insisting on the necessity of our being free from the law in order to our justification and sanctification. To show that his doctrine does not involve any reflection on the law, it was necessary to show why the law is thus inefficient. In order to accomplish this object he explains how the law operates on the depraved heart. It arouses conscience, and it provokes opposition. This is one part of its effect; but not the whole. Even when the heart is renewed, the law cannot by itself promote holiness. It presents indeed the form of beauty, and the soul delights in it after the inward man, but it cannot destroy the power of indwelling sin. The Christian, therefore, must look for deliverance not to the law, but to the grace of God in Jesus Christ. It was essential, therefore, to the apostle's object to show that even for the true Christian, the bondage of the law is unnecessary.

2. The law is spiritual, that is, perfect, deriving its character from its author, the Spirit of God. It is, therefore, the unerring standard of duty, and the source of moral light or knowledge. It should, therefore, be every where known and studied, and faithfully applied as the rule of judgment for our own conduct and that of others. Evangelical doctrines, therefore, which teach the necessity of freedom from the law as a covenant of works, i. e. as prescribing the terms of our justification before God, derogate neither from its excellence nor its authority. It is left to do its proper work in the economy of redemption; to convince of sin, and be a guide to duty, v. 14, &c.

3. The mere presentation of truth, apart from the influences of the Spirit, can neither renew nor sanctify the heart, v. 14, &c.

4. Inability is consistent with accountability. "To perform that which is good I find not," that is, I cannot, v. 18. Gal. 5: 17. As the Scriptures constantly recognise the truth of these two things, so are they constantly united in Christian experience. Every one feels that he cannot do the things that he would, yet is sensible that he is guilty for not doing them. Let any man test his power by the requisition to love God perfectly at all times. Alas, how entire our inability! yet how deep our self-loathing and self-condemnation!

5. The emotions and affections do not obey a determination of the will, vs. 16, 18, 19, 21. A change of purpose, therefore, is not a change of heart.

6. The Christian's victory over sin cannot be achieved by the strength of his resolutions, nor by the plainness and force of moral motives, nor by any resources within himself. He looks to Jesus Christ, and conquers in his strength. In other words, the victory is not obtained in the way of nature, but of grace, vs. 14—25.

REMARKS.

1. As the believer's life is a constant conflict, those who do not struggle against sin, and endeavour to subdue it, are not true Christians, vs. 14—25.

2. The person here described hates sin, v. 15; acknowledges and delights in the spirituality of the divine law, vs. 16, 22; he considers his corruption a dreadful burden, from which he earnestly desires to be delivered, v. 24. These are exercises of genuine piety, and should be applied as tests of character.

3. It is an evidence of an unrenewed heart to express or feel opposition to the law of God as though it were too strict; or to be disposed to throw off the blame of our want of conformity to the divine will from ourselves upon the law as unreasonable. The renewed man condemns himself, and justifies God, even while he confesses and mourns his inability to conform to the divine requisitions, vs. 14—25.

4. The strength and extent of the corruption of our nature are seen from its influence over the best of men, and from its retaining more or less of its power, under all circumstances, to the end of life, v. 25.

5. This corruption, although its power is acknowledged, so far from being regarded as an excuse or palliation for our individual offences, is recognised as the greatest aggravation of our guilt. To say, with the feelings of the apostle, "I am carnal," is to utter the strongest language of self-condemnation and self-abhorrence, vs. 14—25.

6. Although the believer is never perfectly sanctified in this life, his aim and efforts are ever onward; and the experience of the power of indwelling sin, teaches him the value of heaven, and prepares him for the enjoyment of it, vs. 14—25.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTENTS.

Paul had now finished his exhibition of the plan of salvation. He had shown that we are justified gratuitously, that is, by faith in Jesus Christ, without the works of the law. He had proved that, so far from this freedom from the law leading to the indulgence of sin, it is necessary to our sanctification, because the law is as inadequate to the production of holiness in the sinner, as it is to secure pardon or acceptance with God. That such is the insufficiency of the law, he proved by exhibiting its operation both on the renewed and unrenewed mind. Having accomplished all this, he leaves, in the chapter before us, the field of logical argument, and enters on the new and more elevated sphere of joyous exultation.

As, however, there is always warmth of feeling in the apostle's argument, so also is there generally logical arrangement in his highest tri umphs.

His theme here is the security of believers. The salvation of those who have renounced the law and accepted the gracious offers of the gospel is shown to be absolutely certain. The whole chapter is a series of arguments most beautifully arranged in support of this one point. They are all traced back to the great source of hope and security, the unmerited and unchanging love of God in Christ Jesus. The proposition is contained in the first verse. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus; they shall never be condemned or perish.

1. Because they are delivered from the law; all its demands being fulfilled in them by the mission and sacrifice of Christ, vs. 1—4. 2. Because their salvation is actually begun in the regeneration and sanctification of their hearts by the Holy Spirit. Those who have the Spirit of Christ have the Spirit of life, vs. 5—11. 3. Not only is their salvation begun, but they are the children of God, and if children they are heirs, v. 12—17. 4. The afflictions which they may be called to endure, are not inconsistent with this filial relation to God, because they are utterly insignificant in comparison with the glory that shall be revealed in them; and under these afflictions they are sustained both by hope and the intercessions of the Holy Spirit, vs. 18—28. 5. Because they are predestinated to the attainment of eternal life; of which predestination their present santification or effectual calling is the result, and, therefore, the evidence, vs. 28—30. 6. Because God has given his Son to die for them, and thereby to secure their justification and salvation, vs. 31—34. 7. Because the love of God is infinite and unchangeable; from which nothing can separate us, vs. 35—39. Thus from the proximate cause of salvation or the indwelling of the Spirit, does the apostle rise with ever-increasing confidence to the great source and fountain of all in the love of God.

Although, according to this view of the chapter, it is one whole, it may, for the sake of convenience, be divided into three sections.

CHAP. 8: 1—11.

[1]There *is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. [2]For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. [3]For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: [4]that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. [5]For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. [6]For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. [7]Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. [8]So then they that are

in the flesh cannot please God. 9But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. 11But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

ANALYSIS.

This section contains the development of the first two of the apostle's arguments in favour of the position that those who are in Christ Jesus shall never be condemned. The immediate reason is assigned in the second verse, they are delivered from the law. For in view of the insufficiency of the law, God sent forth his Son as a sacrifice for sin, v. 3, and thus secured the justification of all believers, v. 4. Being thus delivered from the law, they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and this possession of the Spirit is incipient salvation: because the carnal mind, which, of course, all who are in the flesh possess, is death; whereas a mind under the government of the Spirit is life and peace. Such is the very nature of the case. Holiness is salvation, vs. 5—7. The reason that death is the necessary consequence of being carnally minded, is the essential opposition between such a state of mind and God. Hence, those who have this state of mind are the objects of the divine displeasure, vs. 7, 8. As, however, believers are not under the government of the flesh, but of the Spirit, their salvation is secured even to the resurrection of the body. For if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in them, he shall also quicken their mortal bodies, vs. 9—11.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *There* is, *therefore*, *now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*. It is a matter of considerable importance to the understanding of this chapter, to decide what is its precise relation to the preceding part of the epistle. The word *therefore* indicates that what follows is an inference: but from what? From the conclusion of the seventh chapter, or from the whole previous discussion? The latter seems to be the only correct view of the context; because the fact that there is no condemnation to believers is no fair inference from what is said at the close of the preceding chapter. Paul does not mean to say, as Luther and others explain v. 1, there is nothing worthy of condemnation in the Christian, because, with his mind, he serves the law of God. Nor does he mean, at least in the first few verses, to argue that believers shall not be condemned, because they are freed from the dominion of sin. But the inference, in the first verse, is the legitimate conclusion of all that Paul had previously established. Believers shall be saved, because they are not under the law, but under grace, which is the main point in

all that Paul has yet said. There is, therefore, *now*, i. e. under these circumstances, viz. the circumstances set forth in the previous part of the epistle.

To be in Christ Jesus signifies to be intimately united to him, in the way in which the Scriptures teach us this union is effected, viz. by having his Spirit dwelling in us, v. 9. The phrase is never expressive of a merely external or nominal union. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," 2 Cor. 5 : 17. See John 15 : 4, &c. 1 John 2 : 5. 3 : 6. To be in Christ, and to have fellowship with him, are, with the apostle John, convertible expressions; see also Rom. 16 : 7, 11.

Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. These words may be understood, 1. as descriptive of the character of those who are in Christ; 2. as assigning the reason why there is no condemnation to them, viz. because they walk not, &c.; or, 3. as describing the condition on which the blessing depends, 'There is no condemnation to them, provided they walk not,' &c. The first and last of these views may be united, and express the real meaning of the apostle.

To walk after is, in Scripture language, *to regulate the life and conduct according to, to follow as a guide or leader*, Acts 21 : 21. Eph. 2 : 2, &c. &c. The *flesh* is our corrupt nature. *Spirit* is either the Holy Spirit, or as opposed to *flesh*, our hearts considered as renewed. The former is much to be preferred, for this is the sense of the word through the whole passage. The meaning of this clause then is, 'Those who are in Christ do not regulate their conduct according to the dictates of their own corrupt hearts, but follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.' If the Spirit dwells in us, he regulates our opinions, feelings, and external conduct. The apostle does not mean to say, in opposition to the preceding chapter and to all experience, that believers never yield to the suggestions of the flesh; but he simply expresses what is the constant aim and general character of the Christian's life.

(2) *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, &c. This verse assigns the reason why there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ, as is evident from the use of *for*, with which the verse commences.

The expression *law of the Spirit* is here opposed to the phrase *the law of sin and death.* The meaning of the one, therefore, must determine that of the other. By the *law of the Spirit* may be understood the power or influence of the renewed principle in the heart, and then the *law of sin and death* must mean indwelling sin, or the law in the members. Or the Spirit is here the Holy Spirit, called the *Spirit of life*, because the author of life; and the word *law* signifies *rule.* The whole phrase would then be descriptive of the gospel, which is the law of which the life-giving Spirit is the author. The expression *the law of sin and death* then means the law of God, which is so called because it is incidentally the cause both of sin and death, as taught in the preceding chapter. The sense of the whole verse as connected with v. 1, there-

fore, is, 'There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, because they have been freed by the gospel from that law which, although in itself good, is still the cause of sin and death.' This latter interpretation, which is perfectly consistent with the usage of the words, is better suited to the context than the other. This verse then assigns an adequate reason for the declaration contained in v. 1; and the truth taught in v. 2, as thus explained, is confirmed in v. 3.

The words *in Christ Jesus* may be connected with the whole preceding clause, 'The law of the Spirit of life which is *by* Christ Jesus;' or, as the absence of the article in the original would seem to require, with the verb that follows, 'Has made me free through Christ Jesus.'

(3) The connexion between this and the preceding verse is obvious. We are freed from the law because the law was weak, i. e. inadequate for the purpose of our salvation. This connexion serves to show that the interpretation just given of the second verse is correct.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, &c. The Greek admits either of the versions here given, *the impossibility of the law* being taken for *what was impossible to the law;* or it may be explained thus, *as to* or *on account of the impotence of the law*, &c. The latter method is to be preferred. The sense then is, 'we are freed from the law, for in view of, or on account of its inadequacy, God having sent his Son,' &c. What is here said of the insufficiency of the law generally, is said especially of the form in which it appeared in the Mosaic institutions in Acts 13: 39. Gal 3: 21. Heb. 7: 18, 19, and is indeed proved at length in the epistle of the Hebrews.

This inadequacy of the law, however, Paul says, arises from no inherent defect but from the corruption of men. *In that it was weak through the flesh.* The same sentiment as that taught in the preceding chapter, vs. 7—25. *In that*, i. e. because that, see Heb. 2: 18. Paul uses the word *flesh* here in its common sense for corruption, or human nature considered as corrupt, see above Rom. 7: 14. *God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh*, &c.; HIS OWN SON; him who is a partaker of his nature. This is the meaning of the word *Son* as applied to Christ; see ch. 1: 4. John 1: 14. 5: 17, &c. 10: 30—39. The greatness of the gift and the urgency of the necessity are therefore presented in the strongest light by these few words.

In the likeness of sinful flesh, i. e. *in a nature similar to the nature of sinful men.* So in Phil. 2: 7, Christ is said to have come "in the likeness of men." The similarity extended to all points except sin; Heb. 2: 17. 4: 15. John 1: 14, where also the word *flesh* is used as here for the nature in which Christ appeared. We have in this verse a distinct reference to the two natures of the Redeemer. The Son of God in human nature; see Gal. 4: 4.

And for sin. These words are to be connected with the preceding God not only sent his Son in our nature, but he sent him *for sin.* That is, either generally on account of sin, or, more specially, *as a sin-offering.*

This latter is to be preferred, for the original words are frequently so used, both in the Old and New Testament. The full phrase is *a sacrifice for sin*. See precisely these words in Heb. 10: 6. Lev. 6: 25. Num. 8: 8. Ps. 40: 6. This sense, too, is best suited to what follows.

Condemned sin in the flesh. The phrase *condemned sin* may be understood to mean *he destroyed sin*, or *he punished sin*. In either case the words *in the flesh* may mean *in human nature*. According to the former view this clause means 'He destroyed sin in our corrupt nature;' and the whole point of the verse is, that because the law could not effect our sanctification, God sent forth his Son on account of sin, and destroyed it in us. According to the other view, the meaning is, 'That God sent his Son as a sin-offering and thus punished sin in the flesh,' i. e. either in *his* flesh, of which mention had just been made, or *in human nature*, a nature like our own. That the latter is the true meaning, appears evident, 1. Because the word rendered *condemned* never means simply *to destroy* or *remove*. The other interpretation, therefore, is contrary to usage. 2. This interpretation best suits the other part of the verse. A *sacrifice* has reference rather to the guilt of sin, than to its impurity; it procures pardon immediately, sanctification only mediately. By the sacrifice of Christ, sin was, therefore, condemned, rather than destroyed or removed. 3. The following verse requires this interpretation. Sin was condemned in Christ, in order that we might be justified. 4. The whole context requires it. The apostle argues thus, 'There is no condemnation to believers because they are not under the law. They are free from that legal system, because God, seeing its insufficiency, sent his Son as a sacrifice for sin, and thus condemned sin, that we might be free from the demands of the law, or might thus satisfy its claims.'

It is not meant to be denied in the interpretation just given of this important verse, that the deliverance of believers from sin is the result of the mission and sacrifice of Christ, or that this idea was not uniformly associated in the apostle's mind with their justification. All that is intended is to show that, in this connexion, where freedom from condemnation, deliverance from the law, the sacrifice of Christ, and condemnation of sin are spoken of, the main idea is the justification and not the sanctification of believers.

(4) *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*, &c. These words express the design and result of the sacrifice of Christ. *The righteousness of the law* means that which the law demands. 'That the demands of the law might be fulfilled in us,' may, however, mean either that we might obey the law, or that we might be freed from its demands, that is, be justified. That the latter is the true meaning here. seems evident, 1. Because this interpretation alone suits the context, if the view given of the previous verses is correct. All the arguments. therefore, in favour of that view, support this interpretation, and need not be repeated. 2. Because in scriptural language the pardon of sin is the direct object of the sacrifice of Christ, and, therefore, this verse, which

expresses this object, must mean we are justified, rather than that we are sanctified. 3. The latter part of the verse would, in the other case, be superfluous. Why should it be said that the law is obeyed by those who obey the law, that is, who walk after the Spirit? This verse, therefore, expresses nearly the same idea with the first. It is there said, 'there is no condemnation to us who walk after the Spirit,' and here, that 'the demands of the law are fulfilled in us who thus walk.' They are fulfilled by the sacrifice of Christ and the punishment of sin in him. He was made sin, or treated as a sinner, for us, that we might be made righteousness, or treated as righteous in him, 2 Cor. 5: 21.

(5) *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh*, &c. The immediate object of this and the following verse is to justify the necessity of the limitation of the blessings of Christ's death to those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The *for*, therefore, connects this verse, not with the main idea, but with the last clause of the preceding. Men must be holy, because sin is death, whereas holiness is life and peace. The necessity of *spirituality*, therefore, lies in the very nature of things.

They who are after the flesh, those who are in the flesh, the carnal, are expressions of like import, and describe those who are governed by the flesh, or by their nature considered as corrupt. The corresponding series, *they who are after the Spirit, who are in the Spirit, the spiritual*, describe those who are under the government of the Holy Ghost. Of the former class it is said they mind the *things of the flesh*, of the latter, *they mind the things of the Spirit*. The word rendered *they mind* expresses primarily the exercise of the intellect, *they attend to*, but, secondarily, and by implication, the exercise of the affections, of which the other is the result. Hence in Col. 3: 2, it is correctly rendered in the passage, "Set your affection on things above." See also Phil. 3: 19. The same may be said of the word *mind* as used by our translators. The idea evidently is, that the objects of attention, desire, and pursuit, to the carnal, are corrupt and worldly; while to the spiritual they are the things which the Spirit proposes and approves.

(6) *For to be carnally minded is death*, &c. This is the next step in the apostle's argument. *For* is here a mere particle of transition, and is equivalent to *but*, 'They who are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; *but* to mind the things of the flesh, or to be carnally minded is death.' It is clear that *to be carnally minded* is exactly what is meant by the corresponding phrase in the preceding verse. This state of mind, this desire and pursuit of carnal things, is, in its own nature, destructive. It leads to all the Scriptures mean by death, alienation from God, unholiness and misery.

To be spiritually minded. A spiritual state of mind, the desire and pursuit of spiritual things is, in its own nature, life and peace. God has so constituted the human soul that the exercise of all right feelings is

attended with happiness, and the exercise of evil ones with misery. To be entirely sinful, therefore, is to be entirely miserable.

(7) The ground of this assertion is, that God is the end and portion of the soul. To be separated from him is, therefore, to be separated from all that is suited to its nature and capacity. But a carnal state does effect this separation from God, and is, therefore, destructive. This idea Paul expresses by saying,

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, &c. The words here rendered *the carnal mind* are the same as those which, in v. 6, are rendered *to be carnally minded;* of course the two expressions in our version must be considered as synonymous. This state of mind, this desire and pursuit of carnal things is said to be hostile to God. This may be understood either as though Paul employed these abstract terms for concrete ones, as with him is very common, and then the sense would be, 'Those who are thus carnally minded are opposed to God, i. e. are not subject to his law and cannot be.' Or the abstract terms may be retained in their proper force, and then the meaning is, 'The desire and pursuit of the things of the flesh is enmity to God.' There is no great difference; for when we say that sin is enmity to God, we at the same time say that the sinner is an enemy of God.

(8) The necessary consequence of this opposition of a mind governed by the flesh, or of a state of mind resulting from the predominance of the flesh to God is, that those who are in this state are the objects of the divine displeasure. *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* To be *in the flesh*, as before remarked, is to be under the government of the *flesh*, or corrupt nature, to be destitute of the grace of God. It is an expression applied to all unrenewed persons, as those who are not *in the flesh* are *in the Spirit.*

The words *cannot please God* may mean either cannot do what is pleasing to God, or cannot be acceptable to him, i. e. are the objects of his displeasure. The latter is better suited to the context, as all that is said in vs. 7, 8 is designed to show the truth of the declaration in v. 6, "to be carnally minded is death." It is so, because the carnal mind is enmity against God, and, therefore, those who have this state of mind are hateful in his sight. But to be the object of the divine displeasure, is to be miserable. In vs. 9, 10, 11, Paul applies to the Romans what he had said generally, and shows how it is that, in the fullest and widest sense, "to be spiritually minded," or possessed of the Spirit, is life and peace, v. 6.

(9) *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. To be in the flesh* and *in the Spirit* are expressions already explained. Paul was persuaded that those to whom he wrote were renewed or spiritual persons; yet he expresses the case hypothetically, 'Ye are renewed, *if so be* ye have the Spirit of God, for if you have not that Spirit you are none of his.'

Spirit of God dwell in you. It need hardly be remarked that *Spirit*

of God cannot, with any regard to the usage of scriptural language, be explained here as meaning *pious feelings*, metonymically called *Spirit*, because produced by his agency. The expression and context alike show that it must be understood of the Holy Ghost. God is said *to dwell* wherever he constantly manifests his presence. Hence, he dwelt in the tabernacle, the temple, in Zion, &c. In the New Testament the church is called *a habitation of God*, Eph. 2: 22, &c., and individual Christians are said to be his temple, 1 Cor. 3: 16. 6: 19. The indwelling of the Spirit in Christians is spoken of in the passages referred to, and in many others, as 2 Tim. 1: 14. 2 Cor. 6: 16, &c.

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. It is evident that what was just called the Spirit of God, is here called the Spirit of Christ; see Gal. 4: 6. Phil. 1: 19. 1 Pet. 1: 11; of course the latter phrase cannot mean *the disposition of Christ*, but the Holy Spirit. He is called the Spirit of Christ, 1. Because possessed by Christ without measure, John 3: 34. Acts 10: 38. Isa. 42: 1, &c. 2. Because he is given or sent by Christ, John 1: 33. 15: 26. 16: 7. Luke 24: 49, &c. &c.

(10) *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin*, &c. The connexion between this verse and the preceding is better seen if *but* instead of *and* is used. 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his, *but* if Christ be in him, then he is a partaker of the life of which Christ is the author,' &c. As in the vs. 7, 8, Paul had confirmed the declaration that "to be carnally minded is death;" he, in vs. 10, 11, illustrates the proposition, that "to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

If Christ be in you is evidently of the same import with the preceding expressions, *to have the Spirit of Christ* and *the Spirit of God dwelling in us*, which shows that the manner in which Christ dwells in his people is by the communication to them of the Holy Spirit. The possession of this Spirit is a pledge of life in its fullest sense, even to the resurrection of the body. Hence, Paul says, "*the body is dead, indeed, on account of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness;*" that is, 'To have the Spirit of God is to have life, for although the body is destined to die on account of sin, still the soul lives, in consequence of its justification and renovation, and even our mortal bodies are hereafter to be restored to life by that Spirit that dwelleth in us,' v. 11.

The body is dead because of sin. This expression and the whole verse have been very variously explained; some understanding them of a spiritual, and others of a temporal death and resurrection. According to the former view, *body* is understood as equivalent to the word *flesh*, signifying corrupt nature; and *dead* means *devoid of power;* and the phrase *because of sin* is rendered *as to sin.* But this interpretation does violence to usage and the context. *Body* very rarely, if ever, has the sense thus ascribed to it, and when connected with the word *dead*, it certainly never has. In the very next verse, too, we have the words *mortal bodies*, which

do not admit of being understood figuratively. The meaning, according to the common interpretation, is natural and consistent with the apostle's object. *The body, indeed, is dead*, i. e. must die, is obnoxious to death, notwithstanding the indwelling of the life-giving Spirit, *on account of sin*. Sin is the cause of all infirmities and sorrows, and, finally, of the dissolution to which our bodies are subject in this world. This fact is inconsistent neither with our being in favour with God, nor with our being partakers of the life of Christ. This is evident from two considerations; first, our souls already participate in this life; and, secondly, our bodies shall be raised up again, and share for ever in that blessedness of which Christ is the author. The former of these considerations is presented in the next clause of the verse, *but the Spirit is life because of righteousness*. If *body*, in one part of this antithesis, be understood of the external frame, *Spirit* must mean the soul. 'Though the body dies, the soul lives.' *To live* evidently includes, as it almost uniformly does when spoken of in relation to the results of Christ's work, the idea of a holy and happy existence in the favour of God. The soul thus lives *because of righteousness*. From the opposition of this word to *sin*, in the other clause, its primary reference must be to the moral renovation of the soul. We shall continue in the enjoyment of the life just spoken of, because the principles of this new and immortal existence are implanted within us. Intimately connected with this meaning of the word rendered *righteousness* in this place, is the other idea which the word expresses, viz. justification. The soul shall live, in the fullest sense of the term, because it is reconciled to God and regarded by him as righteous for Christ's sake. Though both ideas are probably to be included, the former is the more prominent.

(11) *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you.* Such paraphrases for *God* as that which this verse contains are very common with the apostle (see Rom. 4: 24, &c.), and are peculiarly appropriate when the force of the argument, in some measure, rests on the fact to which the descriptive phrase refers. Because God had raised up Christ, there was ground of confidence that he would raise his people up also. Two ideas may be included in this part of the verse; first, that the very possession of that Spirit, which is the source of life, is a pledge and security that our bodies shall rise again; because it would be unseemly that any thing thus honoured by the Spirit should remain under the dominion of death; and, secondly, that the resurrection of Christ secures the resurrection of those that are his, according to Paul's doctrine in 1 Cor. 15: 23.

He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies. This clause cannot, with any regard to usage or the context, be understood of a moral resurrection, or deliverance from sin, as it is explained by Calvin and many others. See the analogous passage, 2 Cor. 4: 14.

By his Spirit that dwelleth in you, or, as it must be rendered according to another reading, "*On account of his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*" The

sense in either case is good. According to the former, the meaning is, that the resurrection of believers will be effected by the power of the Spirit of God; and according to the latter, that the indwelling of his Spirit is the ground or reason why the bodies of believers should not be left in the grave. The internal evidence is decidedly in favour of the first reading.

It will be remarked, that in this verse, and elsewhere, God is said to have raised up Christ from the dead, whereas, in John 10: 17, 18, the Saviour claims for himself the power of resuming his life. So here (according to the common reading) we are said to be raised up by the Holy Spirit; in John 6: 40, Christ says of the believer, "*I* will raise him up at the last day;" and 2 Cor. 4: 14, and in many other places, the resurrection of believers is ascribed to God. These passages belong to that numerous class of texts in which the same work is attributed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and which, in connexion with other sources of proof, show conclusively that "these three are one;" and that the persons of the Adorable Trinity concur in all works *ad extra*.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the former part of this chapter is an inference from the previous discussion, and presents a summary of the great truths already taught, we find here united the leading doctrines of the first portion of the epistle. For example, justification is by faith, v. 1; believers are not under the law, v. 2; the law is insufficient for our justification; God has accomplished that object by the sacrifice of his Son, vs. 3, 4; and this blessing is never disconnected from a holy life, v. 4.

2. The final salvation of those who are really united to Christ, and who show the reality of their union by good works, is secure. This is the doctrine of the whole chapter. This section contains two of the apostle's arguments in its support. 1. They are free from the law which condemned them to death, vs. 2, 3, 4. 2. They are partakers of that Spirit which is the author and earnest of eternal life, vs. 5—11.

3. Jesus Christ is truly divine. He is "God's own Son," i. e. partaker of his nature. The Holy Ghost is his Spirit, and he dwells in all believers, vs. 3, 11.

4. Jesus Christ is truly a man. He came in the likeness of men, v. 3.

5. Christ was a sacrifice for sin, and his sufferings were penal, i. e. they were judicially inflicted in support of the law. 'God punished sin in him,' v. 3.

6. The justification of believers involves a fulfilling of the law; its demands are not set aside, v. 4.

7. Every thing in the Bible is opposed to Antinomianism. Paul teaches that justification and sanctification cannot be disjoined. No one is or can be in the favour of God who lives after the flesh, vs. 5—11.

8. The necessity of holiness arises out of the very nature of things. Sin is death, whereas holiness is life and peace. God has made the con-

nexion between sin and misery, holiness and happiness, necessary and immutable, v. 6.

9. All unrenewed men, that is, all "who are in the flesh," are at once the enemies of God and the objects of his displeasure. Their habitual and characteristic state of mind, that state which every man has who is not "in the Spirit," is enmity to God, and consequently is the object of his disapprobation, vs. 6, 8.

10. The Holy Ghost is the source of all good in man. Those who are destitute of his influences are not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; for no man can call Jesus Lord, that is, can really recognise his authority, but by the Holy Ghost, vs. 5—8.

11. Death, and the other evils to which believers are exposed, are on account of sin, v. 10. They are no longer, however, the evidences of God's displeasure, but of his parental love, Heb. 12: 6.

12. The redemption of Christ extends to the bodies as well as the souls of his people, v. 11.

REMARKS.

1. There can be no safety, no holiness, and no happiness to those who are out of Christ. No safety, because all such are under the condemnation of the law, vs. 1, 2, 3; no holiness, because only such as are united to Christ have the Spirit of Christ, v. 9; and no happiness, because "to be carnally minded is death," v. 6. Hence those who are in Christ should be very humble, seeing they are nothing, and he is every thing; very grateful, and very holy. And those who are out of Christ should at once go to him, that they may attain safety, holiness, and happiness.

2. The liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free, is a liberty from the law and from sin, vs. 2, 5. A legal spirit and an unholy life are alike inconsistent with the Christian character.

3. Believers should be joyful and confident; for the law is fulfilled; its demands are satisfied as respects them. Who then can condemn, if God has justified? v. 4.

4. There can be no rational or scriptural hope without holiness, and every tendency to separate the evidence of the divine favour from the evidence of true piety is anti-Christian and destructive, vs. 4—8.

5. The bent of the thoughts, affections, and pursuits is the only decisive test of character. "They who are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh," &c. v. 5.

6. It is, therefore, a sure mark of hypocrisy if a man, who professes to be a Christian, still minds earthly things, that is, has his affections and efforts supremely directed towards worldly objects.

7. We may as well attempt to wring pleasure out of pain, as to unite the indulgence of sin with the enjoyment of happiness, vs. 6, 7.

8. How blinded must those be who, although at enmity with God, and the objects of his displeasure, are sensible neither of their guilt nor danger! vs. 7, 8.

9. The great distinction of a true Christian is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Hence his dignity, holiness, and happiness, vs. 9—11.

10. If the Spirit of God dwells in the Christian, how careful should he be lest any thing in his thoughts or feelings should be offensive to this divine guest!

11. Christians are bound to reverence their bodies and preserve them from all defilement, because they are the members of Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost, v. 11.

CHAP. 8: 12—28.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the
flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the
Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as
are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have
not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the
Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself
beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 and
if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so
be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For
I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest
expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of
God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but
by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope, 21 because the
creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into
the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the
whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And
not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit,
even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope
that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope
for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience
wait for *it*. 26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we
know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself
maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God. 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them
that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

ANALYSIS.

This section contains two additional arguments in support of the great theme of the chapter, the safety of all who are in Christ. The first is derived from their adoption, vs. 12—17, and the second from the fact that they are sustained by hope and aided by the Spirit under all their

trials; so that every thing eventually works together for their good, vs 18—28.

Paul had just shown that believers were distinguished by the indwelling of the Spirit. Hence he infers the obligation to live according to the Spirit, and to mortify the deeds of the body, v. 12. If they did this they should live, v. 13. Not only because, as previously argued, the Spirit is the source of life, but also because all who are led by the Spirit are the children of God. This is a new ground of security, v. 14. The reality of their adoption is proved, first, by their own filial feelings; as God's relation and feelings towards us are always the counterpart of ours towards him, v. 15. Secondly, by the testimony of the Spirit itself with our spirits, v. 16. If children, the inference is plain that believers shall be saved, for they are heirs. Salvation follows adoption, as, among men, heirship does sonship. They are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, v. 17.

It is nowise inconsistent with their filial relation to God, nor with their safety, that believers are allowed to suffer in this world; 1. Because these sufferings are comparatively insignificant, vs. 18—23. 2. Because they are sustained by hope. 3. Because the Spirit itself intercedes for them. In amplifying the first of these considerations, the comparative insignificancy of the sufferings of this present state, the apostle presents in contrast the unspeakable blessedness and glory which are in reserve for believers, v. 18. To elevate our conceptions of this glory, he represents, 1. The whole creation as looking and longing for its full manifestation, v. 19, &c. 2. All those who have now a foretaste of this blessedness, or the first-fruits of the Spirit, as joining in this sense of present wretchedness and earnest desire of the future good, v. 23.

These afflictions then are not only thus comparatively light in themselves, but they are made still more tolerable by the constant and elevating anticipation of the future inheritance of the saints, vs. 24, 25. And not only so, but the Spirit also sustains us by his intercessions, thus securing for us all the good we need, vs. 26—28. The salvation, then, of believers is secure, notwithstanding their sufferings, inasmuch as they are children, and are sustained and aided by the Holy Spirit.

COMMENTARY.

(12) *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh.* We have here an example of what the rhetoricians call *meiosis*, where less is said than is intended. So far from being debtors to the flesh, the very reverse is the case. This passage is an inference from the exhibition of the nature and tendency of the *flesh*, or the carnal mind, as hostile to God and destructive to ourselves, vs. 5, 8. As this is its nature, and believers are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit, they are under the strongest obligations not to live after the one, but after the other.

(13) The necessity of thus living is enforced by a repetition of the

sentiment of v. 6. To live after the flesh is death; to live after the Spirit is life. *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit*, &c. The necessity of holiness, therefore, is absolute. No matter what professions we may make, or what hopes we may indulge, justification or the manifestation of the divine favour is never separated from sanctification. *Ye shall die* in the comprehensive scriptural sense of that word, Rom. 6: 21, 23; see Gal. 6: 8. *But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* The use of the word *mortify*, to put to death or destroy, seems to have been suggested by the context. Ye shall die, unless ye put to death the deeds of the body; see Col. 3: 5. The destruction of sin is a slow and painful process.

Deeds of the body. It is commonly said that *body* is here equivalent to *flesh*, and, therefore, signifies *corruption.* But it is very much to be doubted whether the word ever has this sense in the New Testament. The passages commonly quoted in its behalf, Rom. 6: 6. 7: 24. 8: 10, 13, are very far from being decisive. It is, therefore, better to take the word in its literal and usual sense. *The deeds of the body* is then a metonymical expression for sinful deeds in general; a part being put for the whole. Deeds performed by the body, being, by implication, taken for evil deeds.

The destruction of sin is to be effected *through the Spirit*, which does not mean the renewed feelings of the heart, but, as uniformly throughout the passage, the Holy Spirit which dwells in believers; see v. 14, where this Spirit is called "Spirit of God." *Ye shall live*, i. e. enjoy the life of which the Spirit is the author; including, therefore, holiness, happiness, and eternal glory.

(14) *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* This is the reason why all such shall live; that is, a new argument is thus introduced in support of the leading doctrine of the chapter. Believers shall enjoy eternal life, not only because they have the Spirit of life, but because they are the sons of God. *To be led by the Spirit* and *to walk after the Spirit* present the same idea, viz. to be under the government of the Spirit, under two different aspects, Gal. 5: 18. 2 Pet. 1: 21. The former phrase refers to the constant and effectual influence of the Holy Ghost in regulating the thoughts, feelings, and conduct of believers. *Are the sons of God.* The term *son*, in such connexions, expresses mainly one or the other of three ideas, and sometimes all of them united. 1. Similarity of disposition, character or nature; Matt. 5: 9, 45, "That ye may be the children (Gr. sons) of your Father which is in heaven." So, too, "sons of Abraham" are those who are like Abraham; and "children of the devil" are those who are like the devil. 2. Objects of peculiar affection. Rom. 9: 26, Those who were not my people, "shall be called sons of the living God;" 2 Cor. 6: 18, "Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." So frequently elsewhere. 3. Those who have a title to some peculiar dignity or advantage. Thus the "sons of Abraham" are those who are heirs with Abraham of the same promise,

Gal. 3: 8, seq. John 1: 12. 1 John 3: 2, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be," &c. The term may indeed express any one of the various relations in which children stand to their parents, as derived from them, dependent on them, &c. &c. The above, however, are the most common of its meanings. In this passage the first and third ideas appear specially intended. 'Believers shall live, because they are the peculiar objects of the divine affection, and are heirs of his kingdom,' vs. 15, 16. That those who are led by the Spirit are really the sons of God, appears from their own filial feelings, and from the testimony of the Spirit.

For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, &c. That is, 'The Holy Spirit, which you have received, does not produce a slavish and anxious state of mind, such as those experience who are under the law; but it produces the filial feelings of affection, reverence, and confidence, and enables us, out of the fulness of our hearts, to call God our Father.'

The phrase, the *spirit of bondage*, may mean a feeling or sense of bondage, as "spirit of meekness," 1 Cor. 4: 21, may mean meekness itself; and "spirit of fear," 2 Tim. 1: 7, fear itself. This use of the word spirit is not uncommon. Or it may mean the Holy Spirit as the author of bondage. 'Believers have not received a spirit which produces slavish feelings, but the reverse.' The context is decidedly in favour of this view: because Paul has been speaking of the Holy Spirit as dwelling in Christians. This Spirit is that which they have received, and is the author of their characteristic feelings. In the words *again to fear* there is an evident allusion to the state of believers prior to the reception of the Spirit. It was a state of bondage in which they feared, i. e. were governed by a slavish and anxious apprehension of punishment. In this state are all unconverted men, whether Jews or Gentiles, because they are all under the law, or the bondage of a legal system.

Spirit of adoption; the spirit which produces the feelings which children have. Adoption is for sonship. *By which we cry, Abba, Father*, i. e. which enables us to address God as our Father. *Abba* is the Syriac and Chaldee form of the Hebrew word for *father*, and, therefore, was to the apostle the most familiar term. As such, it would doubtless, more naturally and fully, express his filial feeling towards God, than the foreign Greek word.

(16) *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* 'Not only do our own filial feelings towards God prove that we are his children, but the Holy Spirit itself conveys to our souls the assurance of this delightful fact.'

The Spirit itself is, of course, the Holy Spirit, 1. Because of the obvious distinction between it and *our spirit*. 2. Because of this use of the word throughout the passage; and 3. Because of the analogy to other texts which cannot be otherwise explained. Gal. 4: 6, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;" Rom.

5 : 5, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us," &c.

Beareth witness with our spirit, that is, 'beareth witness, together with our own filial feelings, to our spirit.' Or, simply, 'assures our spirit.' *Beareth witness to*, means *confirms* or *assures*. 'The Spirit of God produces in our spirit the assurance that we are the children of God.' How this is done, we cannot fully understand, any more than we can understand the mode in which he produces any other effect in our mind. The fact is clearly asserted here as well as in other passages. See Rom. 5 : 5, where the conviction that we are the objects of the love of God, is said to be produced "by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." See 2 Cor. 1: 22. 5 : 5. Eph. 1 : 13. 4 : 30; and in 1 Cor. 2 : 4, 5, and 1 John 2 : 20, 27, and other passages, the conviction of the truth of the gospel is, in like manner, attributed to the Holy Spirit.

(17) *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*, &c. This is the inference from our adoption in favour of the great theme of the chapter, the safety of believers. If the children of God, they shall become partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. The words *to inherit*, *heirs*, and *inheritance*, are all of them used in a general sense in the Scriptures, in reference to the secure possession of any good, without regard to the mode in which that possession is obtained. They are favourite terms with the sacred writers, because possession by inheritance was much more secure than that obtained by purchase or by any other method. There are three ideas included in these words accessory to that which constitutes their prominent meaning; the right, the certainty, and the unalienable character of the possession. Hence, when the apostle says, believers are the heirs of God, he means to recognise their title, in and through the Redeemer, to the promised good, as well as the certainty and security of the possession. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," Gal. 3 : 29. In Gal. 4 : 7, we have the same argument as in the passage before us, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ;" see Col. 3 : 24. Heb. 9 : 15. Eph. 1 : 14, &c. *Joint heirs with Christ.* These words are intended to designate the inheritance which believers are to receive. It is not any possession in this world, but it is that good of which Christ himself is the recipient; we are to be partakers of his inheritance. This idea is frequently presented in the Scriptures. "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord," Matt. 25 : 21; "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom," Luke 22 : 30; "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne," &c. Rev. 3 : 21, and in many other places.

If so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together. That, at the beginning of the second clause, expresses merely the result. 'If we suffer, then also shall we be glorified.' The union of believers with Christ, in suffering as well as in glory, is what he and his apostles taught them to expect. "If any man will come after me, let him deny

himself, and take up his cross and *follow me*," Matt. 16: 24; "If we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him*. If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*," 2 Tim. 2: 11, 12.

(18) *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared*, &c. 'If children, then heirs, for I do not think our present sufferings inconsistent with our being either the children or heirs of God. 1. Because they are comparatively insignificant, vs. 18—23; and 2. Because we are sustained under them, vs. 24—28.' In 2 Cor. 4: 17, Paul speaks much in the same manner of the lightness of the afflictions of this life in comparison with *the glory that shall be revealed in us*. We are not only the recipients of a great favour, but the subjects in which a great display of the divine glory is to be made to others, Eph. 3: 10. It is a revelation of glory in us; see Col. 3: 4. 1 John 3: 2.

The apostle, fired with the thought of the future glory of the saints, pours forth the splendid passage which follows (vs. 19—23), in which he represents the whole creation groaning under its present degradation, and looking and longing for the revelation of this glory as the end and consummation of its existence.

(19) *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.* This and the following verses are evidently intended to exalt our conceptions of the future glory of the children of God, in order to illustrate the truth of the declaration, that, in comparison with that glory, the evils of the present state are not worthy of a thought. *The earnest expectation.* This is a strong expression. The Greek word is etymologically expressive of the gesture of expectation, a looking with outstretched neck.

What is meant in this passage by the *creature*, and afterwards by the *whole creation*, is a very difficult question. As the usage of the term admits of various interpretations, the decision of the point must rest on the context. With which well authorized sense of the word rendered *creature* (κτίσις) will the context best agree? To answer this question we must know what the context means. It will, therefore, be better to defer any remarks on this point, until after the examination of the few next succeeding verses.

The first thing asserted of this *creature* is, that it *waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.* That is, for the time when they shall be manifested in their true character and glory as his sons. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him," 1 John 3: 2. The period thus designated is one for which the whole creation longs, because it is to share in the glory then to be revealed. From this verse, and from v. 23, it is plain that the *creation* and sons of God are distinct.

(20) *For the creature was made subject to vanity*, &c. There are in this verse three reasons expressed or implied, why the creature thus waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. The first is, that it is now in a miserable condition, "subject to vanity." 2. That this subjec-

tion was not voluntary, but imposed by God. 3. That it was never designed to be final.

The creature *is subject to vanity*. As remarked above (ch. 1: 21), vanity and wickedness are very nearly associated ideas in the Scripture; *vain* or *foolish* being often synonymous with *corrupt* or *wicked*. *Vanity*, therefore, is interchanged with *corruption* in the next verse, and expresses both the idea of frailty (corruption), and consequently misery. It is the opposite of the glorious state expected, and, therefore, expresses every thing which distinguishes unfavourably the present from the glorious future. To this state the creature was made subject, *not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Not willingly*, i. e. not of its own accord. The state of corruption is one to which it was loath to be made subject, and from which it would fain be delivered. Or, not by its own free act, but the act of another. Which idea should be preferred depends on the manner in which the next clause is understood.

By reason of him who hath subjected. The original may mean either, *on account of him*, &c., or *by him*. If the former rendering be preferred, the passage means, 'The creature was made subject to its present degraded condition, not from any fondness for it, but out of regard to the authority of God.' If the latter, the meaning is, 'This subjection was not the result of the voluntary act of the creature, but was effected by God.' The former is best suited to the *usual* force of this preposition here used, when connected with the accusative, but the latter gives the better sense; and is by no means inconsistent with the use of the preposition in question, and is, therefore, to be preferred. The words *in hope* may be connected either with the immediately preceding clause, *God hath subjected it in hope;* or with the previous member of the sentence, '*The creature was made subject to vanity* (not voluntarily, but by God) *in hope*.' That is, the subjection was not hopeless, see Acts 2: 26. The latter mode is much to be preferred on account of the following verse.

(21) *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption*, &c. This verse, according to our version, assigns the reason why the subjection of the creature was not hopeless. This reason is, that the creature was to share in the glorious redemption. The particle, however, rendered *because*, may be rendered *that*, and the verse then indicates the object of the hope just spoken of. The subjection was with the hope *that* the creature should be delivered. In either way the sense is nearly the same. *The creature itself also* is another of the forms of expression which show that Paul speaks of the creation in a sense which does not embrace the children of God. *Bondage of corruption*,' i. e. bondage to corruption. The state of frailty and degradation spoken of above.

Delivered, or *liberated into the liberty*, is an elliptical form of expression for '*Delivered and introduced into the liberty*.' *Liberty of glory*, as the words literally mean, or *glorious liberty*, refer to that liberty which consists in, or is connected with the glory which is the end and

consummation of the work of redemption. This word often is used for the whole of the results of the work of Christ as far as his people are concerned. (See v. 18.) The creature then is to be a partaker in some way, according to its nature, of the glories in reserve for the sons of God.

(22) *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.* This verse is a repetition and confirmation of the preceding sentiment. 'The creature is subject to vanity, and longs for deliverance; for we see, from universal and long continued experience, the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain.' It is, however, as Calvin remarks, the pains of birth, and not of death. After sorrow comes the joy of a new existence. The word *together* may have reference to the *whole creation* which groans together, all its parts uniting and sympathizing; or it may refer to the sons of God, 'For the whole creation groans together with the sons of God.' On account of the following verse, in which Christians are specially introduced as joining with the whole creation in this sense of present misery and desire of future good, the former method of understanding the passage seems preferable. *Until now*, from the beginning until the present time. The creature has always been looking forward to the day of redemption.

(23) *And not only* so, *but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit*, &c. 'Not only does the whole creation thus groan, but we ourselves, we Christians, who have a foretaste of heavenly bliss, the first-fruits of the glorious inheritance, we groan within ourselves, and long for the consummation of glory.' The *first-fruits* were that portion of the productions of the earth which were offered to God. From the nature of the case, they contained the evidence and assurance of the whole harvest being secured. The idea, therefore, of an earnest or pledge is included in the phrase, as well as that of priority. See 1 Cor. 15: 20. Rom. 11: 16. 16: 5. 1 Cor. 16: 15. James 1: 18. The phrases, therefore, *the Spirit which is the first-fruits*, and *the Spirit which is an earnest*, are synonymous. The Spirit is the first-fruits of the full inheritance of the saints in light. The expression in the text, therefore, is descriptive of all Christians, and not of any particular class of them; that is, it is not to be confined to those who first received the influences of the Spirit, or were first converted.

Even we ourselves, or *and we ourselves*. 'Not only the whole creation, but we Christians, even we,' &c. *Groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption*, to wit, *the redemption of our body*. What in the previous verse he had called the manifestation of the sons of God, he here calls the *adoption*; the time when it shall appear what we shall be, as the apostle John expresses it. *The redemption of the body* is not so in opposition with *the adoption* that the two phrases are equivalent. The adoption includes far more than the redemption of the body. But the latter event is to be coincident with the former, and is included in it as one of its most prominent parts. Both expressions, therefore, designate the same period. 'We wait for the time when we shall be fully

recognised as the children of God, i. e. for the time when our vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Son of God.' This is the period towards which all eyes and all hearts have been directed among those who have had the first-fruits of the Spirit since the fall of Adam; and for which the whole creation groaneth and is in travail even until now.

The principal arguments in favour of the interpretation just given of this interesting passage, are the following:

The word rendered *creature* means the act of founding or creating Rom. 1: 20; and then that which is created, Rom. 1: 25. Col. 1: 15. The expression *the whole creation* may, according to the context, mean the rational or irrational creation. That in this case it refers to the latter may be argued, 1. Because it cannot be said of mankind generally, or of the rational creation, that they are waiting with earnest desire for the manifestation of the sons of God; that they were made subject to their present state of corruption not of their own accord, but by God; and that they are to be made partakers of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. 2. All this can be said, in strict accordance with the Scriptures, of the external world. The Scriptures frequently speak of the whole creation as a sentient being, rejoicing in God's favour, trembling at his anger, speaking abroad his praise, &c., as Paul here represents it as longing for the great consummation of all things. Again, it is agreeable to Scripture to speak of the earth as cursed for man's sake, as made subject to vanity not on its own account, but by the act of God in punishment of the sins of men. Finally, it is according to the word of God to represent the creation as participating in the blessings and glories of the Messiah's reign. Isa. 35: 1. 29: 17. 32: 15, 16. 2 Pet. 3: 7—13. Heb. 12: 26, 27. 3. This interpretation is suitable to the design of the apostle. Paul's object is not to confirm the certainty of a future state, but to produce a strong impression of its glorious character. Nothing could be better adapted to this object than the grand and beautiful figure of the whole creation waiting and longing for the glorious revelation of the Son of God, and the consummation of his kingdom.

(24, 25) The apostle, intending to show that the present afflictions of believers are not inconsistent with their being the children of God, and are therefore no ground of discouragement, refers not only to their comparative insignificance, but also to the necessity which there is, from the nature of the case, for these sufferings. 'Salvation, in its fulness, is not a present good, but a matter of hope, and of course future; and if future, it follows that we must wait for it in patient and joyful expectation.' While, therefore, *waiting* for salvation is necessary from the nature of the case, the nature of the blessing waited for, converts expectation into desire, and enables us patiently to endure all present evils.

For we are saved by hope. At the close of the preceding verse Paul had spoken of believers as "*waiting for the adoption.*" They thus wait, because salvation is not a present good, but a future one. We are saved *in* hope, i. e. in prospect. The dative, in which form the word for *hope* here occurs, does not in this case express the means by which any thing is done, but the condition or circumstances in which it is. It is, therefore, analogous to our forms of expression, *we have a thing in expectation or prospect.* Salvation is a blessing we have in hope, not in possession; if it be the one, it cannot be the other, *since hope that is seen is not hope.* It lies in the nature of hope that its object must be future. The word *hope* is here used objectively for *the thing hoped for*, as in Col. 1: 5, "The hope that is laid up for you in heaven;" Heb. 6: 18. Eph. 1: 18, &c. The latter clause of the verse, *for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for*, is only a confirmation of the previous declaration that it lies in the nature of hope to have reference to the future.

(25) *But if we hope for that we see not*, &c. That is, 'If hope has reference to the unseen and the future, then as salvation is a matter of hope, it is a matter to be waited for.' It results, therefore, from the nature of the plan of redemption, that the full fruition of its blessing should not be obtained at once, but that, through much tribulation, believers should enter into the kingdom; consequently, their being called upon to suffer is not at all inconsistent with their being sons and heirs. *Then do we with patience wait for it.* There is something more implied in these words than that salvation, because unseen, must be waited for. This no doubt, from the connexion, is the main idea, but we not only wait, but we wait *with patience* or *constancy.* There is something in the very expectation of future good, and, especially, of such good, the glory that shall be revealed in us, to produce not only the patient, but even joyful endurance of all present suffering.

(26) *Not only so.* Not only does hope thus cheer and support the suffering believer, but *likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. Likewise*, literally, *in the same way.* As hope sustains, so, in the same manner, the Spirit does also. Not that the mode of assistance is the same, but simply as the one does, so also does the other. *Helpeth*, the word thus rendered, means *to take hold of any thing with another*, to take part in his burden, and thus to aid. It is, therefore, peculiarly expressive and appropriate. It represents the condescending Spirit as taking upon himself, as it were, a portion of our sorrows to relieve us of their pressure. *Our infirmities* is the appropriate rendering of the original, which expresses the idea both of weakness and suffering. Heb. 4: 15, "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities;" 2 Cor. 12: 5, "I will not glory but in mine infirmities."

For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit, &c. This is said as an illustration and confirmation of the previous general declaration; it is an example of the way in which the Spirit aids us. 'He helpeth our infirmities, for he teaches us how to pray, dictating

to us our supplications,' &c. The necessity for this aid arises from our ignorance, we know not what to pray for. We cannot tell what is really best for us. Heathen philosophers gave this as a reason why men ought not to pray! How miserable their condition when compared to ours. Instead of our ignorance putting a seal upon our lips and leaving our hearts to break, the Spirit gives our desires a language heard and understood of God. As we do not know how to pray, the Spirit teaches us. This idea the apostle expresses by saying *the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us.* The simple verb rendered *he maketh intercession*, properly means *to meet*, then *to approach any one to make supplication*, Acts 25: 24. This supplication may be against any one, Rom. 11: 2, or for him, v. 34. Heb. 7: 25. Hence, *to intercede for* is to act the part of advocate in behalf of any one. This Christ is said to do for us in the last two passages cited, as well as in Heb. 9: 24. 1 John 2: 1, and John 14: 16, for Christ calls the Holy Spirit "*another* advocate," i. e. another than himself. This office is ascribed to the Spirit in the last passage quoted in John 14: 26. 15: 26, and 16: 7, as well as in the passage before us. As the Spirit is thus said, in the general, to do for us what an advocate did for his client, so he does also what it was the special duty of the advocate to perform, i. e. to dictate to his clients what they ought to say, how they should present their cause. In this sense the present passage is to be understood. 'We do not know how to pray, but the Spirit teaches. He excites in us those desires which, though never uttered except in sighs, or which, though too big for utterance, are known and heard of God.' It is doubtful whether Paul means to say these groanings cannot be uttered, or simply, that they are not uttered; desires which vent themselves only in sighs. The Greek word admits of either sense, and either is suited to the context.

(27) Though these desires are not or cannot be clothed in words, the eye of him who searches the heart can read and understand them there. *And he who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit.* The conjunction ought to be rendered disjunctively. 'The groanings cannot be uttered, *but* they are neither unintelligible nor neglected.' *He who searcheth the hearts* is a common paraphrase for God, and here most appropriate. As no man knoweth the thoughts of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him; to read those unexpressed emotions of the soul is the prerogative of that Being to whose eyes all things are naked and opened. "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins," Jer. 17: 10; see Ps. 7: 9. Rev. 2: 23, &c. &c.

Knoweth the mind of the Spirit. Not simply understands, but recognises and approves, as he knows "the ways of the righteous," Ps. 1: 6. The former idea, that of *understanding*, though the more prominent, does not exclude the other. *The mind of the Spirit*, i. e. those feelings or that state of mind of which the Spirit is the author, the desires which the Spirit calls forth in our souls. *The Spirit* must necessarily be that Spirit which intercedes for the saints; and which, in the preceding verse,

is expressly distinguished from our souls. The interpretation, therefore, which makes "*the mind of the Spirit*" mean *the desires of our spirit*, though it would give a very good sense, is irreconcilable with the context.

Because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. This is the reason why God is said *to know*, i. e. not only to understand, but to approve the mind of the Spirit, or those unutterable ongings which the Spirit excites. Being produced by the Spirit of God himself, they are, of course, agreeable to the will of God, and secure of being approved and answered. This is the great consolation and support of believers. They know not either what is best for themselves or agreeable to the will of God; but the Holy Spirit dictates those petitions and excites those desires which are consistent with the divine purposes, and which are directed towards blessings the best suited to our wants. Such prayers are always answered. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us," 1 John 5: 14.

(28) *And we know all things work together for good to them that love God*, &c. This may be regarded as virtually, though not formally, an inference from what Paul had taught concerning afflictions. As they are comparatively insignificant, as they call forth the exercises of hope and give occasion for the kind interposition of the Holy Spirit, far from being inconsistent with our salvation, they contribute to our good. It seems, however, more natural to consider the apostle as presenting the consideration contained in this verse as an additional reason why the afflictions of this life are not inconsistent with our being the sons of God. These afflictions are real blessings. *All things*, as is usually the case with such general expressions, is to be limited to the things spoken of in the context, i. e. the sufferings of the present time. See 1 Cor. 2: 15, where the spiritual man is said to understand "all things;" Col. 1: 20, where Christ is said to reconcile "all things unto God;" and Eph. 1: 10, with many other similar passages. Of course it is not intended that other events, besides afflictions, do not work together for the good of Christians, but merely that this idea is not here expressed by the apostle.

Those to whom afflictions are a real blessing are described, first, as *those who love God;* and, secondly, as those *who are called according to his purpose.* The former of these clauses describes the character of the persons intended; *they love God*, which is a comprehensive expression for all the exercises of genuine religion. The latter clause declares a fact, with regard to all such, which has a most important bearing on the apostle's great object in this chapter, *they are called according to his purpose.* The word *called*, as remarked above (1: 7), is never, in the epistles of the New Testament, applied to those who are the recipients of the mere external invitation of the gospel. It always means *effectually called*, i. e. it is always applied to those who are really brought to accept of the blessings to which they are invited. This call is not

according to the merits of men, but according to the divine *purpose*. "Who hath saved us, and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. 1:9. Eph. 1:11. Rom. 9:11. The design of the apostle, in the introduction of this clause, seems to have been twofold. First, to show, according to his usual manner, that the fact that some men love God is to be attributed to his sovereign grace, and not to themselves; and, secondly, that if men are called, according to the eternal purpose of God, their salvation is secure. By this latter idea this clause is associated with the passage that follows, and with the general object of the chapter. That the *calling* of men does secure their salvation is proved in vs. 29—30.

DOCTRINES.

1. True Christians are the sons of God, objects of his affection, partakers of his moral nature, and heirs of his kingdom, v. 14.

2. The relation of God to us is necessarily the counterpart of ours to him. If we feel as friends to him, he feels as a friend towards us; if our sentiments are filial, his are parental, v. 15.

3. God, who is every where present and active, manifests his presence, and communicates with his creatures, in a manner accordant with their nature, although in a way that is inscrutable, v. 16.

4. Assurance of salvation has a twofold foundation. The experience of those affections which are the evidences of true piety, and the witness of the Holy Spirit. The latter can never be separated from the former; for the Spirit can never testify to what is not the truth. He can never assure an enemy that he is a child of God, v. 16.

5. Union with Christ is the source of all our blessings of justification and sanctification, as taught in the previous chapters, and of salvation, as taught in this, v. 17.

6. Afflictions are not inconsistent with the divine favour, nor with our being the sons of God, vs. 18—25.

7. The future glory of the saints must be inconceivably great, if the whole creation, from the beginning of the world, groans and longs for its manifestation, vs. 19—23.

8. The curse consequent on the fall has affected the state of the external world. The consummation of the work of redemption may be attended with its regeneration, vs. 20—22.

9. The present influences of the Spirit are first-fruits of the inheritance of the saints; the same in kind with the blessings of the future state, though less in degree. They are a pledge of future blessedness, and always produce an earnest longing for the fruition of the full inheritance, v. 23.

10. As, for wise reasons, salvation is not immediately consequent on regeneration, hope, which is the joyful expectation of future good, becomes the duty, solace, and support of the Christian, vs. 24, 25.

11. The Holy Spirit is our Paraclete (John 14: 16) or advocate, we are his *clients*, we know not how to plead our own cause, but he dictates to us what we ought to say. This office of the Spirit ought to be recognised, sought, and gratefully acknowledged, v. 26.

12. Prayer to be acceptable must be according to the will of God, and it always is so when it is dictated or excited by the Holy Spirit, v. 27.

13. All events are under the control of God; and even the greatest afflictions are productive of good to those who love him, v. 28.

14. The calling or conversion of men, involving so many of their free acts, is a matter of divine purpose, and it occurs in consequence of its being so, v. 28.

REMARKS.

1. If God, by his Spirit, condescends to dwell in us, it is our highest duty to allow ourselves to be governed or led by him, vs. 12, 13.

2. It is a contradiction in terms, to profess to be the sons of God, if destitute of the filial feelings of confidence, affection, and reverence, v. 15.

3. A spirit of fear, so far from being an evidence of piety, is an evidence of the contrary. The filial spirit is the genuine spirit of religion, v. 15.

4. Assurance of hope is not fanatical, but is an attainment which every Christian should make. If the witness of men is received, the witness of God is greater. As the manifestation of God's love to us is made in exciting our love towards him, so the testimony of his Spirit with ours, that we are the sons of God, is made when our filial feelings are in lively exercise, v. 16.

5. Christians ought neither to expect nor wish to have suffering with Christ disconnected with their being glorified with him. The former is a preparation for the latter, v. 17.

6. The afflictions of this life, though in themselves not joyous but grievous, are worthy of little regard in comparison with the glory that shall be revealed in us. To bear these trials properly, we should think much of the manifestation of the sons of God, v. 18.

7. As the present state of things is one of bondage to corruption, as there is a dreadful pressure of sin and misery on the whole creation, we should not regard the world as our home, but desire deliverance from this bondage, and introduction into the liberty of the children of God, vs. 19—22.

8. It is characteristic of genuine piety to have exalted conceptions of future blessedness, and earnest longings after it. Those, therefore, who are contented with the world and indifferent about heaven, can hardly possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, v. 23.

9. Hope and patience are always united. If we have a well-founded hope of heaven, then do we with patience and fortitude wait for it. This

believing resignation and joyful expectation of the promises are peculiarly pleasing in the sight of God and honourable to religion, vs. 24, 25.

10. How wonderful the condescension of the Holy Spirit! How great his kindness in teaching us, as a parent his children, how to pray and what to pray for! How abundant the consolation thus afforded to the pious in the assurance that their prayers shall be heard, vs. 26, 27.

11. Those who are in Christ, who love God, may repose in perfect security beneath the shadow of his wings. All things shall work together for their good, because all things are under the control of him who has called them to the possession of eternal life according to his own purpose, v. 28.

CHAP. 8: 29—39.

29For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. 30Moreover whom he did predestinate them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? 32He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. 34Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ANALYSIS.

This section contains the exhibition of two additional arguments in favour of the safety of believers. The first of these is founded on the decree or purpose of God, vs. 29, 30; and the second, on his infinite and unchanging love, vs. 31—39. In his description of those with regard to whom all things shall work together for good, Paul had just said that they were such who are called or converted in execution of a previous purpose of God, v. 28. If this is the case, the salvation of believers is secure, because the plan on which God acts is connected in all its parts; whom he foreknows, he predestinates, calls, justifies, and glorifies. Those, therefore, who are called, shall certainly be saved, vs. 29, 30. Secondly, if God is for us, who can be against us? If God so loved us as

to give his Son for us, he will certainly save us, vs. 31, 32. This love has already secured our justification, and has made abundant provision for the supply of all our wants, vs. 33, 34.

The triumphant conclusion from all these arguments, that nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ, but that we shall be more than conquerors over all enemies and difficulties, is given in vs. 35—39.

COMMENTARY.

(29) *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate*, &c. The connexion of this verse with the preceding, and the force of *for*, appears from what has already been said. Believers are called in accordance with a settled plan and purpose of God, *for* whom he calls he had previously predestinated: and as all the several steps or stages of our salvation are included in this plan of the unchanging God, if we are predestinated and called, we shall be justified and glorified.

Whom he did foreknow. As the words *to know and foreknow* are used in three different senses, applicable to the present passage, there is considerable diversity of opinion which should be preferred. The word may express *prescience* simply, according to its literal meaning; or, as *to know* is often *to approve and love*, it may express the idea of peculiar affection in this case; or it may mean to *select* or *determine upon*. Among those who adopt one or the other of these general views, there is still a great diversity as to the manner in which they understand the passage. These opinions are too numerous to be here recited.

As the literal meaning of the word *to foreknow* gives no adequate sense, inasmuch as all men are the objects of the divine prescience, whereas the apostle evidently designed to express by the word something that could be asserted only of a particular class; those who adopt this meaning here supply something to make the sense complete. *Who he foreknew would repent and believe*, or *who would not resist his divine influence*, or some such idea. There are two objections to this manner of explaining the passage. 1. The addition of this clause is entirely gratuitous; and, if unnecessary, it is, of course, improper. There is no such thing said, and, therefore, it should not be assumed, without necessity, to be implied. 2. It is in direct contradiction to the apostle's doctrine. It makes the ground of our calling and election to be something in us, our works; whereas Paul says that such is not the ground of our being chosen. "Who hath called us not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace," &c., 2 Tim. 1: 9. Rom. 9: 11, where the contrary doctrine is not only asserted, but proved and defended.

The second and third interpretations do not essentially differ. The one is but a modification of the other; for whom God peculiarly loves, he does thereby distinguish from others, which is in itself a selecting or choosing of them from among others. The usage of the word is favourable to either modification of this general idea *of preferring*. "The people which he foreknew," i. e. loved or selected, Rom. 11: 2; "Who

verily was fore-ordained (Gr. *foreknown*), i. e. *fixed upon, chosen* before the foundation of the world," 1 Pet. 1 : 20. 2 Tim. 2 : 19. John 10 : 14, 15; see also Acts 2 : 23. 1 Pet. 1 : 2. The idea, therefore, obviously is, that those whom God peculiarly loved, and by thus loving distinguished or selected from the rest of mankind; or to express both ideas in one word, those whom *he elected* he predestined, &c.

He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. To predestinate is to destine or appoint beforehand, as the original word is used in Acts 4 : 28, "To do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done;" "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children," Eph. 1 : 5; "Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," Eph. 1: 11. In all the cases in which this predestination is spoken of, the idea is distinctly recognised, that the ground of the choice which it implies is not in us. We are chosen in Christ, or according to the free purpose of God, &c. This is a *fore*-ordination, a determination which existed in the divine mind long prior to the occurrence of the event, even before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1 : 4; so that the occurrences in time are the manifestations of the eternal purpose of God, and the execution of the plan of which they form a part.

The end to which those whom God has chosen, are predestined, is conformity *to the image of his Son*, i. e. that they might be like his Son in character and destiny. He hath chosen us "that we should be holy and without blame before him," Eph. 1 : 4. 4 : 24. "He hath predestined us to the adoption," i. e. to the state of sons, Eph. 1 : 5. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," 1 Cor. 15 : 49; see Phil. 3 : 21. 1 John 3 : 2. As Paul in verse 17, had spoken of our suffering with Christ, and in the subsequent passage was principally employed in showing that though in this respect we must be like Christ, it was not inconsistent with our being sons and heirs, so here, when we are said to be conformed to the image of Christ, the idea of our bearing the same cross is not to be excluded. We are to be like our Saviour in moral character, in our present sufferings and future glory.

That he might be the first-born among many brethren. This clause may express the design or merely the result of what had just been said. 'God predestinated us to be sons, *in order that* Christ might be,' &c. or 'He made us his sons, hence Christ is,' &c. *The first-born* generally expresses merely the idea of pre-eminence. Ps. 89 : 27, "I will make him my first-born," i. e. I will highly distinguish him. Col. 1 : 15, "First-born of every creature," i. e. the head of the creation. As all those who are called are destined to bear the image of Christ, to share in the dignity, purity, and blessedness of the children of God, the result will be, that Christ, who partakes of our nature, and is not ashamed to call us brethren, will be the glorious head and leader of the sons of God, a mul titude which no man can number.

(30) *Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called.* Those whom he had thus fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of his Son in moral character, in suffering, and in future glory, he effectually calls, i. e. leads by the external invitation of the gospel, and by the efficacious operation of his grace, to the end to which they are destined. That the *calling* here spoken of is not the mere external call of the gospel, is evident both from the usage of the word, and from the necessity of the case; see 1 Cor. 1: 9, "God is faithful by whom ye were called to the fellowship of his Son," i. e. effectually brought into union with him. This use of the word, thus common in the New Testament, is obviously necessary here, because the apostle is speaking of a call which is peculiar to those who are finally saved. Whom he *calls* he justifies and glorifies; see also verse 28.

Whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. The past tense here used may express the idea of *frequency*. Whom he calls, he is wont to justify; and whom he is wont to justify, he is accustomed to glorify. So that the meaning is the same as though the present tense had been used, 'Whom he calls, he justifies,' &c.; see James 1: 11. 1 Pet. 1: 24, where the same tense is rendered as the present, "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." Or the past is employed, because Paul is speaking of that God, who sees the end from the beginning, and in whose decree and purpose all future events are comprehended and fixed; so that in predestinating us, he at the same time, in effect, called, justified, and glorified us, as all these were included in his purpose.

The justification here spoken of, is doubtless that of which the apostle has been speaking throughout the epistle, the regarding and treating sinners as just, for the sake of the righteousness of Christ. The blessings of grace are never separated from each other. Election, calling, justification, and salvation are indissolubly united; and, therefore, he who has clear evidence of his being called, has the same evidence of his election and final salvation. This is the very idea the apostle means to present for the consolation and encouragement of believers. They have no cause for despondency if the children of God, and called according to his purpose, because nothing can prevent their final salvation.

(31) *What shall we say to these things?* That is, what is the inference from all that has hitherto been said? *If God be for us*, if he has delivered us from the law of sin and death, if he has renewed us by his Spirit which dwells within us, if he recognises us as his children and his heirs, and has predestinated us to holiness and glory, *who can be against us?* If God's love has led to all the good just specified, what have we to fear for the future? He who spared not his own Son will freely give us all things. This verse shows clearly what has been the apostle's object from the beginning of the chapter. He wished to demonstrate that to those who accede to the plan of salvation which he taught, i. e. to those who are in Christ Jesus, there is no ground of apprehension; their final

salvation is fully secured. The conclusion of the chapter is a recapitula tion of all his former arguments, or rather the reduction of them to one which comprehends them all in their fullest force; GOD IS FOR US. He, as our Judge, is satisfied; as our Father, he loves us; as the supreme and almighty Controller of events, who works all things after the counsel of his own will, he has determined to save us; and as that Being whose love is as unchangeable as it is infinite, he allows nothing to separate his children from himself.

(32) *He that spared not his own Son*, &c. That ground of confidence and security which includes all others, is the love of God; and that exhibition of divine love which surpasses and secures all others, is the gift of HIS OWN SON. Paul having spoken of Christians as being God's sons by adoption, was led to designate Christ as his own peculiar Son, in a sense in which neither angels (Heb. 1: 5) nor men can be so called. That this is the meaning of the phrase is evident, 1. Because this is its proper force; *own* Son being opposed to *adopted* sons. 2. Because the context requires it, as Paul had spoken of those who were sons in a different sense just before. 3. Because this apostle, and the other sacred writers, designate Christ as Son of God in the highest sense, as partaker of the divine nature; see Rom. 1: 4.

But delivered him up for us all. He was delivered up to death; see Gal. 1: 4. Rom. 4: 25. Isa. 53: 6. 38: 13 (in the LXX.), and Matt. 10: 21. *For us all;* not merely for our benefit, but *in our place;* see Rom. 5: 6, 7, 8, &c. *Us all*, in this connexion, can only be understood of all those of whom Paul had been speaking, all who love God and are called according to his purpose.

How shall he not with him freely give us all things? If God has done the greater, he will not leave the less undone. If he has given his Son to death, he will not fail to give the Spirit to render that death effectual. This is the ground of the confidence of believers. They do not expect to attain salvation because they are sure of their own strength of purpose, but because the love of God towards them is free and unbounded, and having led to the gift of his Son, will not withhold those lesser gifts which are necessary for their final security and blessedness.

(33) *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* This and the following verse show how fully the security of believers is provided for by the plan of redemption. What is it they have to fear under the government of a just and powerful God? There is nothing to be dreaded but sin; if that be pardoned and removed, there is nothing left to fear. In the strongest manner possible, the apostle declares that the sins of believers are pardoned, and shows the ground on which this pardon rests. To them, therefore, there can be neither a disquieting accusation nor condemnation. *Who can lay any thing?* &c., i. e. no one can, neither Satan, conscience, nor the law. If the law of God be satisfied, "the strength of sin," its condemning power, is destroyed. Even conscience, though it upbraids, does not terrify. It produces the ingenu

ous sorrow of children, and not the despairing anguish of the convict; because it sees that all the ends of punishment are fully answered in the death of Christ, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

God's elect, i. e. those whom God has chosen; see v. 29. The word *elect* is sometimes used in a secondary sense for *beloved*, which idea is implied in its literal sense, as those chosen are those who are peculiarly beloved. This sense may be given to it in 1 Pet. 2: 4, "elect and precious" may be 'beloved and precious;' Col. 3: 12, "as the elect of God" may be equal to the beloved of God. But there is not a single passage where the word occurs in which it may not be understood in its proper sense. "Many are called and few chosen," Matt. 20: 16; "for the elect's sake," 24. 22; "the chosen of God," Luke 23: 35; "according to the faith of God's elect," Tit. 1: 1; 1 Pet. 1: 1, 2, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God;" see 1 Pet. 2: 9. Luke 18: 7, and every other passage in which the word occurs. This being the proper meaning of the term, and that which is in strict accordance with the scriptural representation of men under the Old as well as New Testament, as being chosen of God to be the recipients of peculiar blessings, it ought not to be departed from here, especially as the context renders its being retained necessary to the full expression of the apostle's meaning. The persons against whom he says no accusation can be brought, are those who were chosen, predestinated, called, and justified.

It is God that justifieth. This and the corresponding phrases in the next verse are frequently pointed interrogatively, so as to be read thus. "God who justifies? Who is he that condemneth? Christ who died?" &c. The sense is the same, but the force and beauty of the passage is thus marred. As we are all to stand before the tribunal of God, and our eternal destiny is to depend on his judgment, if he acquits, if he for Christ's sake pronounces us just, then we are secure.

(34) *Who is he that condemneth?* i. e. no one can condemn. In support of this assertion there are, in this verse, four conclusive reasons presented; the death of Christ, his resurrection, his exaltation, and his intercession. *It is Christ that died.* By his death, as an atonement for our sins, all ground of condemnation is removed. *Yea, rather, that is risen again.* The resurrection of Christ, as the evidence of the sacrifice of his death being accepted, and of the validity of all his claims, is a much more decisive proof of the security of all who trust in him than his death could be. See ch. 1: 4. 4: 25. Acts 17: 31. 1 Cor. 15: 17, &c.

Who is even at the right hand of God, i. e. is associated with God in his universal dominion. Ps. 110: 1, "Sit thou on my right hand," i. e. share my throne; Eph. 1: 20. Rev. 3: 21, "As I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." Heb. 1: 3, "Who sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." From these and other passages in their connexion, it is evident that Christ is exalted to universal dominion, all power in heaven and earth is given into his

hands. If this is the case, how great the security it affords the believer. He who is engaged to effect his salvation is the director of all events and of all worlds.

Who also maketh intercession for us, i. e. who acts as our advocate, pleads our cause before God, presents those considerations which secure for us pardon and the continued supply of the divine grace; see v. 26. Heb. 7: 25. 9: 24. 1 John 2: 1. He is our patron, in the Roman sense of the word, one who undertakes our case; an advocate, whom the Father heareth always. How complete then the security of those for whom he pleads! Of course this language is figurative; the meaning is, that Christ continues since his resurrection and exaltation to secure for his people the benefits of his death, every thing comes from God through him and for his sake.

(35) *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* This is the last step in the climax of the apostle's argument; the very summit of the mount of confidence, whence he looks down on his enemies as powerless, and forward and upward with full assurance of a final and abundant triumph. No one can accuse, no one can condemn, no one can separate us from the love of Christ. This last assurance gives permanency to the value of the other two.

The love of Christ is clearly Christ's love towards us, and not ours towards him. The latter indeed would give a good sense, 'Nothing can induce us to give up our love to the Redeemer.' But this interpretation is entirely inconsistent with the context and the drift of the whole chapter. Paul was speaking of the great love of God towards us as manifested in the gift of his Son, and of the love of Christ as exhibited in his dying, rising, and interceding for us. This love, which is so great, he says is unchangeable. Besides, the apostle's object in the whole chapter is to console and confirm the confidence of believers. The interpretation just mentioned is not in accordance with this object. It is no ground of confidence to assert or even to feel that we will never forsake Christ, but it is the strongest ground of assurance to be convinced that his love will never change. And, moreover, v. 39 requires this interpretation; for there Paul expresses the same sentiment in language which cannot be misunderstood. "No creature," he says, "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." This is evidently God's love towards us.

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, &c. This is merely an amplification of the preceding idea. Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ, neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, &c. That is, whatever we may be called upon to suffer in this life, nothing can deprive us of the love of him who died for us, and who now lives to plead our cause in heaven, and, therefore, these afflictions, and all other difficulties, are enemies we may despise.

(36) *As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long*, &c. A quotation from Ps. 44: 22, agreeably to the LXX. translation. The

previous verse of course implied that believers should be exposed to many afflictions, to famine, nakedness, and the sword; this, Paul would say, is in accordance with the experience of the pious in all ages. We suffer, as it is recorded of the Old Testament saints that they suffered.

(37) *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors*, &c. This verse is connected with the 35th. 'So far from these afflictions separating us from the love of Christ, they are more than conquered.' That is, they are not only deprived of all power to do us harm, they minister to our good. They swell the glory of our victory. *Through him that loved us.* The triumph which the apostle looked for was not to be effected by his own strength or perseverance, but by the grace and power of the Redeemer. 1 Cor. 15: 10. Gal. 2: 20. Phil. 4: 13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

(38, 39) In these verses the confidence of the apostle is expressed in the strongest language. He heaps words together in the effort to set forth fully the absolute inability of all created things, separately or united, to frustrate the purpose of God, or to turn away his love from those whom he has determined to save.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, &c. &c. It is somewhat doubtful how far the apostle intended to express distinct ideas by the several words here used. The enumeration is by some considered as expressing the general idea that nothing in the universe can injure believers, the detail being designed merely as amplification. This, however, is not very probable. The former view is to be preferred. *Neither death.* That is, though cut off in this world, their connexion with Christ is not thereby destroyed. "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," John 10: 28. *Nor life*, neither its blandishments, nor its trials. "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord. So that, living or dying, we are the Lord's," Rom. 14: 8.

Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers. Principalities and powers are by many understood here to refer to the authorities of this world as distinguished from angels. But to this it may be objected that Paul frequently uses these terms in connexion to designate the different orders of spiritual beings, Eph. 1: 21. Col. 1: 16; and, secondly, that corresponding terms were in common use among the Jews in this sense. It is probable, from the nature of the passage, that this clause is to be taken generally, without any specific reference to either good or bad angels as such. 'No superhuman power, no angel, however mighty, shall ever be able to separate us from the love of God.' *Neither things present, nor things to come.* Nothing in this life, nor in the future; no present or future event, &c.

(39) *Nor height, nor depth.* These words have been very variously explained. That interpretation which seems on the whole most consistent with scriptural usage and the context, is that which makes the terms equivalent to *heaven* and *earth*. 'Nothing in heaven or earth;' see Eph.

4: 9. Isa. 7: 11, "Ask it either in the depth or the height above," &c. &c. *Nor any other creature.* Although the preceding enumeration had been so minute, the apostle, as if to prevent despondency having the possibility of a foothold, adds this all-comprehending specification, *no created thing* shall be able to separate us from the love of God. This love of God, which is declared to be thus unchangeable, is extended towards us only on account of our connexion with Christ, and therefore the apostle adds, *which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;* see Eph. 1: 6. 2 Tim. 1: 9.

DOCTRINES.

1. God chooses certain individuals and predestinates them to eternal life. The ground of this choice is his own sovereign pleasure; the end to which the elect are predestinated is conformity to Jesus Christ in his moral character, and in his sufferings and glory, v. 29.

2. Those who are thus chosen shall certainly be saved, v. 30.

3. The only evidence of election is effectual calling, that is, the production of holiness. And the only evidence of the genuineness of this call and the certainty of our perseverance, is a patient continuance in well doing, vs. 29, 30.

4. The love of God, and not human merit or power, is the proper ground of confidence. This love is infinitely great, as is manifested by the gift of God's own Son; and it is unchangeable, as the apostle strongly asserts, vs. 31—39.

5. The gift of Christ is not the result of the mere general love of God to the human family, but also of special love to his own people, v. 32.

6. Hope of pardon and eternal life should rest on the death, the resurrection, universal dominion, and intercession of the Son of God, v. 34.

7. Trials and afflictions of every kind have been the portion of the people of God in all ages; as they cannot destroy the love of Christ towards us, they ought not to shake our love towards him, v. 35.

8. The whole universe, with all that it contains, as far as it is good, is the friend and ally of the Christian; as far as it is evil, it is a more than conquered foe, vs. 35—39.

9. The love of God, infinite and unchangeable as it is, is manifested to sinners only through Jesus Christ our Lord, v. 39.

REMARKS.

1. The plan of redemption, while it leaves no room for despondency, affords no pretence for presumption. Those whom God loves he loves unchangeably; but it is not on the ground of their peculiar excellence, nor can this love be extended towards those who live in sin, vs. 29—39.

2. As there is a beautiful harmony and necessary connexion between the several doctrines of grace, between election, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification, so must there be a like harmony in the character of the Christian. He cannot experience the joy and confidence

flowing from his election, without the humility which the consideration of its being gratuitous must produce; nor can he have the peace of one who is justified, without the holiness of one who is called, vs. 29, 30.

3. As Christ is the first-born or head among many brethren, all true Christians must love him supremely, and each other as members of the same family. Unless we have this love, we do not belong to this sacred brotherhood, v. 29.

4. If the love of God is so great and constant, it is a great sin to distrust or doubt it, vs. 30—39.

5. Christians may well bear with patience and equanimity the unjust accusations, or even the condemnatory sentences of the wicked, since God justifies and accepts them. It is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment, vs. 33, 34.

6. If God spared not his own Son, in order to effect our salvation, what sacrifice on our part can be considered great, as a return for such love, or as a means of securing the salvation of others, v. 32.

7. The true method to drive away despondency is believing apprehensions of the scriptural grounds of hope, viz. the love of God, the death of Christ, his resurrection, his universal dominion, and his intercession, verse 34.

8. Though the whole universe were encamped against the solitary Christian, he would still come off more than conqueror, vs. 35—39.

9. Afflictions and trials are not to be fled from or avoided, but overcome, v. 37.

10. All strength to endure and to conquer comes to us through him that loved us. Without him we can do nothing, v. 37.

11. How wonderful, how glorious, how secure is the gospel! Those who are in Christ Jesus are as secure as the love of God, the merit, power, and intercession of Christ can make them. They are hedged round with mercy. They are enclosed in the arms of everlasting love. "Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen!"

CHAPTER IX.

With the eighth chapter the discussion of the plan of salvation, and of its immediate consequences, was brought to a close. The consideration of the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, commences with the ninth, and extends to the end of the eleventh. Paul, in the first place, shows that God may consistently reject the Jews, and

extend the blessings of the Messiah's reign to the Gentiles, 9: 1—24; and, in the second, that he has already declared that such was his purpose, vs. 25—29. Agreeably to these prophetic declarations, the apostle announces that the Jews were cast off and the Gentiles called; the former having refused submission to the righteousness of faith, and the latter having been obedient, vs. 30—33. In the tenth chapter Paul shows the necessity of this rejection of the ancient people of God, and vindicates the propriety of extending the invitation of the gospel to the heathen in accordance with the predictions of the prophets. In the eleventh he teaches that this rejection of the Jews was neither total nor final. It was not total, inasmuch as many Jews of that generation believed; and it was not final, as the period approached when the great body of that nation should acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, and be reingrafted into their own olive tree.

CONTENTS.

In entering on the discussion of the question of the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, the apostle assures his brethren that he was led to entertain this opinion from no want of affection or respect for them or their national privileges, vs. 1—5. That his doctrine on this subject was true, he argues, 1. Because it was not inconsistent with the promises of God, who is perfectly sovereign in the distribution of his favours, vs. 6—24. And, secondly, because it was distinctly predicted in their own Scriptures, vs. 25—29. The conclusion from this reasoning is stated in vs. 30—33. The Jews are rejected for their unbelief, and the Gentiles admitted to the Messiah's kingdom.

CHAP. 9: 1—5.

[1]I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, [2]that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. [3]For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: [4]who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises; [5]whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

ANALYSIS.

As the subject about to be discussed was of all others the most painful and offensive to his Jewish brethren, the apostle approaches it with the greatest caution. He solemnly assures them that he was grieved at heart on their account; and that his love for them was ardent and disinterested, vs. 1—3. Their peculiar privileges he acknowledged and respected. They were highly distinguished by all the advantages connected with the Old

Testament dispensation, and, above all, by the fact that the Messiah was, according to the flesh, a Jew, vs. 4, 5.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not*, &c. There are three ways in which the words *in Christ*, or *by Christ*, may here be understood. 1. They may be considered as part of the formula of an oath, *I say the truth, by Christ.* The preposition rendered *in* is so used in Matt. 5 : 34, &c. Rev. 10 : 6. But in these and similar cases it is always in connexion with a verb of swearing. In addition to this objection, it may be urged that no instance occurs of Paul's appealing to Christ in the form of an oath. This interpretation, therefore, is not to be approved. 2. The words *in Christ* may be connected with the pronoun *I.* '*I in Christ*,' i. e. as a Christian, or, 'In the consciousness of my union with Christ, I declare,' &c. 1 Cor. 1 : 30. 3 : 1. Rom. 16 : 3. 7. 3. The words may be used adverbially, and be translated *after a Christian manner.* This also is a frequent use of this and analogous phrases. See 1 Cor. 7 : 39, "Only in the Lord," i. e. only after a religious manner. Rom. 16 : 22. Eph. 6 : 1. Col. 3 : 18. The sense of the passage is much the same whether we adopt the one or the other of the last two modes of explanation. Paul means to say that he speaks in a solemn and religious manner, as a Christian, conscious of his intimate relation to Christ.

I say the truth, I lie not. This mode of assertion, first affirmatively and then negatively, is common in the Scriptures. "Thou shalt die, and not live," Isa. 38 : 1; "He confessed and denied not," John 1 : 20. *My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.* There are also three ways in which the words *in the Holy Ghost* may be connected and explained. 1. They are often considered as belonging to the first clause and standing in a parallelism with the words *in Christ*, and being also an oath. But in this way the construction is unnatural, and the sense not only unusual but revolting. 2. They may be connected with the words *bearing me witness.* The sense would then be, 'My conscience beareth me witness together with the Holy Ghost.' That is, not only my own conscience, but the Holy Spirit assures me of my sincerity. 3. They may be connected with the word *conscience.* 'My conscience under the influence of the Holy Ghost;' my sanctified conscience. There seems little ground of preference between the last two; either gives a good sense.

(2) *That I have great heaviness*, &c. This it is which Paul so solemnly asserts. He was not an indifferent spectator of the sorrow, temporal and spiritual, which was about to come on his countrymen. All their peculiar national advantages, and the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom which they had wickedly rejected, were to be taken away; they were, therefore, left without hope either for this world or the next. The consideration of their condition filled the apostle with great and constant heaviness. The

sincerity and strength of this sorrow for them he asserts in the strongest terms in the next verse.

(3) *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren*, &c. The word *anathema*, which is used in this verse by the apostle, properly means *something set up* or *consecrated*, and is applied frequently to votive offerings. A secondary application of the word was to those persons who were devoted to destruction as sacrifices for the public good. And as, among the Greeks, the lowest and vilest of the people were selected for that purpose, it became a term of execration, and expressed the idea of exposure to divine wrath. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word to which it answers, occurs very frequently, and probably the root originally meant *to cut off, to separate.* Hence, the substantive derived from it, meant *something separated or consecrated.* In usage, however, it was applied only to such things as could not be redeemed, and which, when possessed of life, were to be put to death. It is evident from such passages as Lev. 27: 28, 29. Deut. 7: 26. Josh. 6: 17. 1 Sam. 15: 21, that the word usually designates a person or thing set apart to destruction on religious grounds; something accursed.

In the New Testament the use of the Greek word is very nearly the same. The only passages in which it occurs besides the one before us, are the following; Acts 23: 14, "We have bound ourselves under a great curse (we have placed ourselves under an anathema), that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul." The meaning of this passage evidently is, 'We have imprecated on ourselves the curse of God, or we have called upon him to consider us as anathema.' 1 Cor. 12: 3, "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed (anathema);" 1 Cor. 16: 22, "Let him be anathema maranatha;" Gal. 1: 8, 9, "Let him be accursed (anathema)." In all these cases it is clear that the word is applied to those who were regarded as deservedly exposed, or devoted to the curse of God. In this sense it was used by the early Christian writers, and from them passed into the use of the church. "Let him be anathema," being the constant formula of pronouncing any one, in the judgment of the church, exposed to the divine malediction.

Among the later Jews, this word, or the corresponding Hebrew term, was used in reference to the second of the three degrees into which they divided excommunication (see Buxtorf's Rabbinical Lexicon). But no analogous use of the word occurs in the Bible. Such being the meaning of this word in the Scriptures, its application in this case by the apostle admits of various explanations.

The common interpretation, however, and that which seems most natural, is, 'I am grieved at heart for my brethren, for I could wish myself accursed from Christ, that is, I could be willing to be regarded and treated as anathema, a thing accursed, for their sakes.' That this interpretation suits the force and meaning of the words, and is agreeable to the context, must, on all hands, be admitted. The only objection to it is

of a theological kind. It is said to be inconsistent with the apostle's character to wish that he should be accursed from Christ. But to this it may be answered, 1. Paul does not say that he did deliberately and actually entertain such a wish. The expression is evidently hypothetical and conditional, 'I could wish, were the thing allowable, possible or proper.' So far from saying he actually desired to be thus separated from Christ, he impliedly says the very reverse. 'I could wish it, were it not wrong; or, did it not involve my being unholy as well as miserable, but as such is the case, the desire cannot be entertained.' This is the proper force of the imperfect indicative when thus used; it implies the presence of a condition which is known to be impossible. 2. Even if the words expressed more than they actually do, and the apostle were to be understood as saying that he could wish to be cut off from Christ, yet, from the nature of the passage, it could fairly be understood, as meaning nothing more than that he was willing to suffer the utmost misery for the sake of his brethren. The difficulty arises from pressing the words too far, making them express definite ideas, instead of strong and indistinct emotions. The general idea is, that he considered himself as nothing, and his happiness as a matter of no moment, in view of the salvation of his brethren.

(4) The object of the apostle in the introduction to this chapter, contained in the first five verses, is to assure the Jews of his love and of his respect for their peculiar privileges. The declaration of his love he had just made, his respect for their advantages is expressed in the enumeration of them contained in this verse. *Who are Israelites*, i. e. the peculiar people of God. This includes all the privileges which are afterwards mentioned. The word *Israel* means *one who contends with God*, or *a prince with God*. Hos. 12: 3, "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God." As it was given to Jacob as an expression of God's peculiar favour, Gen. 32: 28, its application to his descendants, implied that they, too, were the favourites of God. *To whom pertaineth the adoption.* As Paul is speaking here of the external or natural Israel, the *adoption* or *sonship* which pertained to them, as such, must be external also, and is very different from that which he had spoken of in the preceding chapter. They were the sons of God, i. e. the objects of his peculiar favour, selected from the nations of the earth to be the recipients of peculiar blessings and to stand in a peculiar relation to God. Ex. 4: 22, "Thou shalt say unto Pharoah, Israel is my son, even my first-born;" Deut. 14: 1, "Ye are the children of the Lord your God;" Jer. 31: 9, "I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born."

And the glory. These words are variously explained. They may be connected with the preceding, as explanatory of the adoption or as qualifying it, and the two words be equivalent to *glorious adoption.* But as every other specification in this verse is to be taken separately, so

should this be. In the Old Testament that symbolical manifestation of the divine presence which filled the tabernacle and rested over the ark, is called *the glory of the Lord.* Ex. 40: 34, "A cloud covered the tent of the congregation; and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle;" Ex. 29: 43. Lev. 16: 2. 1 Kings 8: 11. 2 Chron. 5: 14. Hag. 2: 7. By the Jews this symbol was called the *Shekinah*, i. e. the presence of God. Besides this, the manifestation of God's presence in general is called his glory; Isa. 6: 4, "The whole earth is full of his glory," &c. It is probable, therefore, that Paul intended by this word to refer to the fact that God dwelt in a peculiar manner among the Jews, and in various ways manifested his presence, as one of their peculiar privileges.

The covenants. The plural is used because God at various times entered into covenant with the Jews and their forefathers; by which he secured to them innumerable blessings and privileges; see Gal. 3: 16, 17. Eph. 2: 12. *The giving of the law, the legislation.* The word is sometimes used for the *law itself*, it may here be taken strictly, *that giving of the law*, i. e. the solemn and glorious annunciation of the divine will from Mount Sinai. The former is the most probable; because the possession of the law was the grand distinction of the Jews, and one on which they peculiarly relied; see ch. 2: 17. *The service* means the whole ritual, the pompous and impressive religious service of the tabernacle and temple. *The promises* relate, no doubt, specially to the promises of Christ and his kingdom. This was the great inheritance of the nation. This was the constant subject of gratulation and object of hope. See Gal. 3: 16, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made;" v. 21, "Is the law against the promises of God?" So in other places the word *promises* is used specially for the predictions in reference to the great redemption, Acts 26: 6.

(5) *Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came*, &c. The descent of the Jews from men so highly favoured of God as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was justly regarded as a great distinction. *And of whom.* The *and* here shows that *whom* refers, not to the fathers, but to the Israelites, to whom pertained the adoption, the law, the service, and of whom Christ came. This was the great honour of the Jewish race. For this they were separated as a peculiar people, and preserved amidst all their afflictions. As it was true, however, only in one sense, that Christ was descended from the Israelites, and as there was another view of his person, according to which he was infinitely exalted above them and all other men, the apostle qualifies his declaration by saying *as concerning the flesh.* The word *flesh* is used so often for human nature in its present state, or for *men*, that the phrase *as to the flesh*, in such connexions, evidently means *in as far as he was a man*, or *as to his human nature*, ch. 1: 3. In like manner, when it is said Christ was manifested or came in the flesh, it means, he came in our nature, 1 Tim. 3: 16. 1 John 4: 2, &c.

Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. There is but one in-

terpretation of this important passage which can, with the least regard to the rules of construction, be maintained. Paul evidently declares that Christ, who he had just said was, as to his human nature, descended from the Israelites, is, in another respect, the supreme God, or God over all, and blessed for ever. That this is the meaning of the passage is evident from the following reasons. 1. The relative *who* must agree with the nearest antecedent. There is no other subject in the context sufficiently prominent to make a departure from this ordinary rule, in this case, even plausible. "Of whom Christ came, who is," &c. Who is? Certainly Christ. 2. The context requires this interpretation, because, as Paul was speaking of Christ, it would be very unnatural thus suddenly to change the subject and break out into a doxology to God. Frequently as the pious feelings of the apostle led him to use such exclamations of praise, he never does it except when God is the immediate subject of discourse. See ch. 1: 25, "Who worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for evermore;" Gal. 1: 5. 2 Cor. 11: 31. Besides, it was the very object of the apostle to set forth the great honour to the Jews of having Christ born among them, and this, of course, would lead to his presenting the dignity of the Redeemer in the strongest light. For the greater he was, the greater the honour to those of whose race he came. 3. The antithesis, which is evidently implied between the two clauses of the verse, is in favour of this interpretation. Christ, according to the flesh, was an Israelite, but, according to his higher nature, the supreme God. See the strikingly analogous passage in ch. 1: 3, 4, where Christ is said, according to one nature, to be the Son of David, according to the other, the Son of God. 4. No other interpretation is at all consistent with the grammatical construction, or the relative position of the words. To suppose that this passage is a doxology, referring not to Christ, but to God, is in the highest degree unnatural, because God is not mentioned in the context, and because the constant form of doxology in the Scriptures is "Blessed be God;" and never "God be blessed." The word for *blessed* always stands first, and the word for *God* after it with the article. As the word *God*, in the original, is without the article in this case, it must be the predicate and not the subject of the sentence; that is, the meaning must be, *who is God*, and not *God is*. In the strongest and clearest language, therefore, Paul declares that Christ is the supreme God.

Over all is equivalent to *most high*, *supreme*. The same words occur in Eph. 4: 6, "One God, who is above all." This passage, therefore, shows that Christ is God in the highest sense of the word. *Amen* is a Hebrew word signifying *true*. It is used in the New Testament often adverbially, and is rendered *verily;* or, at the close of a sentence, as expressing desire, *let it be*, or merely approbation. It does not, therefore, necessarily imply that the clause to which it is attached contains a wish. It is used here, as in Rom. 1: 25, for giving a solemn assent to

what has been said. "God who is blessed for ever. Amen." 'To this declaration we say, Amen. It is true.'

DOCTRINES.

1. The Holy Ghost is ever present with the souls of the people of God. He enlightens the judgment and guides the conscience, so that the true and humble Christian often has an assurance of his sincerity and of the correctness of what he says or does, above what the powers of nature can bestow, v. 1.

2. There is no limit to the sacrifice which one man may make for the benefit of others, except that which his duty to God imposes, v. 3.

3. Paul does not teach that we should be willing to be damned for the glory of God. 1. His very language implies that such a wish would be improper. For in the ardour of his disinterested affection he does not himself entertain or express the wish, but merely says, in effect, that were it proper or possible, he would be willing to perish for the sake of his brethren. 2. If it is wrong to *do* evil that good may come, how can it be right to wish to *be* evil that good may come? 3. There seems to be a contradiction involved in the very terms of the wish. Can one love God so much as to wish to hate him? Can he be so good as to desire to be bad? We must be willing to give up houses and lands, parents and brethren, and our life also, for Christ and his kingdom; but we are never required to give up holiness for his sake, for this would be a contradiction.

4. It is, in itself, a great blessing to belong to the external people of God, and to enjoy all the privileges consequent on this relation, v. 4.

5. Jesus Christ is at once man and God over all, blessed for ever. Paul asserts this doctrine in language too plain to be misunderstood, v. 5.

REMARKS.

1. Whatever we say or do, should be said or done as in Christ, i. e. in a Christian manner, v. 1.

2. If we can view, unmoved, the perishing condition of our fellow men, or are unwilling to make sacrifices for their benefit, we are very different from Paul, and from Him who wept over Jerusalem, and died for our good upon Mount Calvary, vs. 2, 3.

3. Though we may belong to the true church, and enjoy all its privileges, we may still be cast away. Our external relation to the people of God cannot secure our salvation, v. 4.

4. A pious parentage is a great distinction and blessing, and should be felt and acknowledged as such, v. 5.

5. If Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, if he has a nature like our own, how intimate the union between him and his people; how tender the relation; how unspeakable the honour done to human nature in having it thus exalted! If Jesus Christ is God over all and blessed for

ever, how profound should be our reverence, how unreserved our obedience, and how entire and joyful our confidence! v. 5.

6. These five verses, the introduction to the three following chapters, teach us a lesson which we have before had occasion to notice. Fidelity does not require that we should make the truth as offensive as possible. On the contrary, we are bound to endeavour, as Paul did, to allay all opposing or inimical feelings in the minds of those whom we address, and to allow the truth, unimpeded by the exhibition of any thing offensive on our part, to do its work upon the heart and conscience.

CHAP. 9: 6—24.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel which are of Israel: 7 neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. 9 For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. 10 And not only *this;* but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac; 11 (for *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. 14 What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 *What* if God, willing to show *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

ANALYSIS.

The apostle now approaches the subject which he had in view, the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles. That God had

determined to cast off his ancient covenant people, as such, and to extend the call of the gospel indiscriminately to all men, is the point which the apostle is about to establish. He does this by showing, in the first place, that God is perfectly free thus to act, vs. 6—24, and, in the second, that he had declared in the prophets that such was his intention, vs. 25—33.

That God was at liberty to reject the Jews and to call the Gentiles, Paul argues, 1. By showing that the promises which he had made, and by which he had graciously bound himself, were not made to the natural descendants of Abraham, as such, but to his spiritual seed. This is plain from the case of Ishmael and Isaac; both were the children of Abraham, yet one was taken and the other left. And also from the case of Esau and Jacob. Though children of the same parents, and born at one birth, yet "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated," is the language of God respecting them, vs. 6—13. 2. By showing that God is perfectly sovereign in the distribution of his favours; that he is determined neither by the external relations, nor by the personal character of men, in the selection of the objects of his mercy. This is proved by the examples just referred to; by the choice of Isaac instead of Ishmael, and especially by that of Jacob instead of Esau. In this case the choice was made and announced before the birth of the children, that it might be seen that it was not according to works, but according to the sovereign purpose of God, vs. 6—13.

Against this doctrine of the divine sovereignty there are two obvious objections, which have been urged in every age of the world, and which the apostle here explicitly states and answers. The first is, it is unjust in God thus to choose one, and reject another, at his mere good pleasure, v. 14. To this Paul gives two answers; 1. God claims the prerogative of *sovereign* mercy; saying, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," vs. 15—16. 2. He exercises this right, as is evident from the case of Pharaoh, with regard to whom he says, "For this same purpose have I raised thee up," vs. 17, 18. The second objection is, if this doctrine is true, it destroys the responsibility of men, v. 19. To this also Paul gives a twofold answer; 1. The very urging of an objection against a prerogative which God claims in his word, and exercises in his providence, is an irreverent contending with our Maker, especially as the right in question necessarily arises out of the relation between men and God as creatures and Creator, vs. 20, 21. 2. There is nothing in the exercise of this sovereignty inconsistent with either justice or mercy. God only punishes the wicked for their sins, while he extends undeserved mercy to the objects of his grace. There is no injustice done to one wicked man in the pardon of another, especially as there are the highest objects to be accomplished both in the punishment of the vessels of wrath, and the pardon of the vessels of mercy. God does nothing more than exercise a right inherent in sovereignty, viz. that of dispensing pardon at his pleasure, vs. 22—24.

COMMENTARY.

(6) It has already been remarked (ch. 3: 3) that it was a common opinion among the Jews that the promises of God being made to Abraham and to his seed, all connected with him as his natural descendants, and sealed as such by the rite of circumcision, would certainly inherit the blessings of the Messiah's reign. It was enough for them, therefore, to be able to say, "We have Abraham to our father." This being the case, it was obvious that it would at once be presented as a fatal objection to the apostle's doctrine of the rejection of the Jews, that it was inconsistent with the promises of God. Paul, therefore, without even distinctly announcing the position which he intended to maintain, removes this preliminary objection. In vs. 2, 3, in which he professed his sorrow for his brethren, and his readiness to suffer for them, it was, of course, implied that they were no longer to be the peculiar people of God, heirs of the promises, &c. &c. This, Paul shows, involves no failure on the part of the divine promises. *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect*, &c. That is, 'I say nothing which implies that the word of God has failed.' The *word of God* means any thing which God has spoken, and here, from the connexion, the promise made to Abraham, including the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ. *Hath taken none effect*, literally, *hath fallen*, i. e. failed. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail," literally, *to fall*, Luke 16: 17. So this word is used frequently. The reason why the rejection of the Jews involved no failure on the part of the divine promise is, that the promise never contemplated the mere natural descendants of Abraham. *For they are not all Israel which are of Israel*, i. e. all the natural descendants of the patriarch are not the true people of God, to whom alone the promises properly belong.

(7) *Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children.* In this and the following verses the sentiment is confirmed, that natural descent from Abraham does not secure a portion in the promised inheritance. The language of this verse is, from the context, perfectly intelligible. The seed or natural descendants of Abraham are not all his children in the true sense of the term; i. e. like him in faith and heirs of his promise. So in Gal. 3: 7, Paul says, "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."

But in Isaac shall thy seed be called. As the word rendered *called* sometimes means *to choose*, Isa. 48: 12. 49: 1, the meaning of the phrase may be, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be chosen.' 'I will select him as the recipient of the blessings promised to you.' 2. *To be called* is often equivalent to *to be, to be regarded*, as Isa. 62: 4, "Thou shalt not be called desolate," i. e. thou shalt not be desolate. Hence, in this case, the text may mean, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be,' i. e. he shall be thy seed. Or, 3. '*After Isaac* shall thy seed be called,' they shall derive their name from him. Whichever explanation be preferred, the meaning

of the verse is the same. 'Not all the children of Abraham were made the heirs of his blessings, but Isaac was selected by the sovereign will of God to be the recipient of the promise.'

(8) *That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God.* The simplest view of this verse would seem to be, to regard it as an explanation of the historical argument contained in the preceding verse. 'The Scriptures declare that Isaac, in preference to Ishmael, was selected to be the true seed and heir of Abraham, *that is*, or *this proves* that it is not the children of the flesh that are regarded as the children of God,' &c. This suits the immediate object of the apostle, which is to show that God, according to his good pleasure, chooses one and rejects another, and that he is not bound to make the children of Abraham, as such, the heirs of his promise. It is very common, however, to consider this passage as analogous to that in Gal. 4 : 22—31; and to regard the apostle as unfolding the analogy between the history of Isaac and Ishmael and that of the spiritual and natural children of Abraham; Isaac being the symbol of the former, and Ishmael of the latter. As Ishmael, "who was born after the flesh" (Gal. 4 : 23), i. e. according to the ordinary course of nature, was rejected, so also are the children of the flesh; and as Isaac, who was born "by promise," i. e. in virtue of the promised interference of God, was made the heir, so also are they heirs who, in like manner, are the children of the promise, that is, who are the children of God, not by their natural birth, but by his special and effectual grace. This passage is then designed to point out an instructive analogy between the case of Isaac and the true children of God: he was born in virtue of a special divine interposition, so now, those who are the real children of God are born, not after the flesh, but by his special grace.

The children of the promise. This expression admits of various explanations. 1. Many take it as meaning merely *the promised children*, as *child of promise* is equivalent to *child which is promised.* But this evidently does not suit the application of the phrase to believers as made here, and in Gal. 4 : 28. 2. It may mean, according to a common force of the genitive, *children in virtue of a promise.* This suits the context exactly. Isaac was born not after the ordinary course of nature, but in virtue of a divine promise; Gal. 4 : 23, where the expressions *born after the flesh*, and *born by promise*, are opposed to each other. It is of course implied in the phrase *children in virtue of a promise* that it is by a special interposition that they become children, and this is the sense in which Paul applies the expression to believers generally. "Who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John 1 : 13. Comp. Gal. 4 : 28. 3 : 18, 29. *Are counted for the seed*, i. e. are regarded and treated as such. 'Not the natural descendants of Abraham are the children of God, but those who are born again by his special interposition, are regarded and treated as his true children.' See the same form of expression in Gen. 31 : 15.

(9) *For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.* This verse is evidently designed to show the propriety, and to explain the force of the phrase *children of the promise.* Isaac was so called because God said, *At this time I will come,* &c. This is not only a prediction and promise that Isaac should be born, but also a declaration that it should be in consequence of God's coming, i. e. of the special manifestation of his power; as, in scriptural language, God is said to come wherever he specially manifests his presence or favour, John 14: 23. Luke 1: 68, &c.

(10) *And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one,* &c. Not only the case of Isaac and Ishmael demonstrates the sovereignty of God in the choice of the recipients of his favour, but that of Rebecca evinces the same truth in a still clearer light. It might be supposed that Isaac was chosen on account of his mother, but in the case of Jacob there is no room for such a supposition. Jacob and Esau had the same mother, the same father, and were born at one birth. The choice here was certainly a sovereign one.

(11) *For the* children *being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil,* &c. The force of *for* is clear by a reference to the preceding verse, and the object of the apostle. 'Not only does the case of Isaac and Ishmael evince the sovereignty of God, but that of Rebecca and her children does the same, in a still more striking manner, *for* the decision between her children was made previous to their birth, for the very purpose of showing that it was not made on the ground of works, but of the sovereign pleasure of God.' This is an example which cannot be evaded. With regard to Ishmael, it might be supposed that either the circumstances of his birth or his personal character was the ground of his rejection, but with regard to Esau neither of these suppositions can be made.

Neither having done good or evil. The design of the introduction of these words is expressly stated in the next clause. It was to show that the ground of choice was not in them, but in God; and this is the main point in regard to the doctrine of election, whether the choice be to the privileges of the external theocracy, or to the spiritual and eternal blessings of the kingdom of Christ.

That the purpose of God, according to election, might stand. This is the reason why the choice was made prior to birth. The original here admits of various interpretations, which, however, do not materially alter the sense. The word rendered *purpose* is that which was used in the previous chapter, v. 28, and means here, as there, *a determination of the will,* and of itself expresses the idea of its being sovereign, i. e. of having its ground in the divine mind and not in its objects. Hence, in 2 Tim. 1: 9, it is said, "Who hath called us not according to our works, but according to his own purpose," &c.; see Eph. 1: 11. 3: 11. The words *according to election* are designed to fix more definitely the nature of this purpose. The word *election* often means the act of choice

itself, as 1 Thess. 1: 4, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." In this sense the clause means, 'The purpose of God in reference to election, or in relation to this choice.' This view of the passage is perfectly consistent with the context. The choice was made prior to birth, in order that the true nature of the purpose of God in reference to it might appear. *Should stand*, i. e. should be established and recognised in its true character, that is, that it might be seen it was *not of works, but of him that calleth.* This purpose of God, in reference to election, or the choice itself, is *not of works*, i. e. does not depend on works, but on *him that calleth.* That is, the ground of the choice is not in those chosen, but in God who chooses. In the same sense our justification is said to be "not of works," Gal. 2: 16, and often; i. e. is not on the ground of works; see Rom. 11: 6. 2 Tim. 1: 9. The language of the apostle in this verse, and the nature of his argument, are so perfectly plain, that there is little diversity of opinion as to his general meaning.

(12) *It was said to her the elder shall serve the younger.* These words are to be connected with the 10th verse, according to our version, in this manner, "Not only *this*, but Rebecca also, when she had conceived," &c. "it was said to her," &c. According to this view, although the construction is irregular, the sense is sufficiently obvious. As it was said to Rebecca that the elder of her sons should serve the younger, prior to the birth of either, it is evident that the choice between them was not on account of their works. It has been said that this declaration relates not to Jacob and Esau personally, but to their posterity, 1. Because in Gen. 25: 23, whence the quotation is made, it is said, "Two nations are within my womb, and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger." 2. Because Esau did not personally serve Jacob, although the descendants of the one were subjected to those of the other. It is no doubt true that the prediction contained in this passage has reference not only to the relative standing of Jacob and Esau, as individuals, but also to that of their descendants. It may even be allowed that the latter was principally intended in the annunciation to Rebecca. But it is clear, 1. That this distinction between the two races presupposed and included a distinction between the individuals. Jacob was made the special heir to his father Isaac, obtained as an individual the birth-right and the blessing, and Esau as an individual was cast off. The one, therefore, was personally preferred to the other. 2. In Paul's application of this event to his argument, the distinction between the two as individuals was the very thing referred to. This is plain from the 11th verse, in which he says, "The *children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil," &c. It is, therefore, the nature of the choice between the children that is the point designed to be presented. As to the objection that Esau never personally served Jacob, it is founded on the mere literal sense of the words. Esau did acknowledge his inferiority to Jacob, and was in fact postponed to

him on various occasions. This is the real spirit of the passage. This prophecy, as is the case with all similar predictions, had various stages of fulfilment. The relation between the two brothers during life; the loss of the birth-right blessing and promises on the part of Esau; the temporary subjugation of his descendants to the Hebrews under David, their final and complete subjection under the Maccabees; and especially their exclusion from the peculiar privileges of the people of God, through all the early periods of their history, are all included. Compare the prediction of the subjection of Ham to his brethren; and of Japheth's dwelling in the tents of Shem, Gen. 9: 25—27.

(13) *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* These words are quoted from Malachi 1: 2, 3, where the prophet is reproving the Jews for their ingratitude. As a proof of his peculiar favour, God refers to his preference for them from the first, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother, saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau," &c. This passage, as well as the one quoted in v. 12, and just referred to, relates to the descendants of Jacob and Esau, as well as to the individuals themselves; the favour shown to the posterity of the one, and withheld from hat of the other, being founded on the distinction originally made between the two brothers. The meaning, therefore, is, that God preferred one to the other, or chose one instead of the other. As this is the idea meant to be expressed, it is evident that in this case the word *hate* means *to love less, to regard and treat with less favour.* Thus in Gen. 29: 33, Leah says, she was hated by her husband; while in the preceding verse, the same idea is expressed by saying, "Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah," Matt. 10: 37. Luke 14: 26, "If a man come to me and hate not his father and mother," &c. John 12: 25.

The doctrine of the preceding verses is, that God is perfectly sovereign in the distribution of his favours, that the ground of his selecting one and rejecting another is not their works, but his own good pleasure. To this doctrine there are two plausible objections; first, it is not consistent with the divine justice, v. 14; second, it is incompatible with human responsibility, v. 19. To the former the apostle answers first, God claims distinctly in his word this prerogative, v. 15; and secondly, he obviously exercises it, as is seen in the dispensations of his providence, v. 17.

(14) *What shall we say then, is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.* The apostle, according to his usual manner, proposes the objection to his own doctrine in the form of a question, denies its validity, and immediately subjoins his reason; see Rom. 3: 5. Gal. 3: 21. The obvious objection here presented is, that it is unjust in God, thus, according to his own purpose, to choose one and reject another. This Paul denies, and supports his denial by an appeal, in the first place, to Scripture, and in the second to experience. It will be remarked that these arguments of the apostle are founded on two assumptions. The first is, that the Scriptures are the word of God; and the second, that what God actually does cannot be unrighteous. Consequently any objection which can

be shown to militate against either an express declaration of Scripture, or an obvious fact in providence, is fairly answered.

(15) *For God saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.* The connexion and argument are obvious. 'It is not unjust in God to exercise his sovereignty in the distribution of his mercies, *for*, he expressly claims the right.' The passage quoted is from the account of the solemn interview of Moses with God. In answer to the prayer of the prophet for his people and for himself, God answered, "I will proclaim my name before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious," &c. Ex. 33: 19. It is, therefore, a formal declaration of a divine prerogative. The form of expression *I will do what I do*, or *I do what I do*, is here, as in Ex. 16: 23. 2 Sam. 15: 20, designed to convey the idea, that it rests entirely with the agent to act or not, at his pleasure. The ground of decision is in himself. In the connexion of this verse with the former, therefore, it is obvious that Paul quotes this declaration to prove that God claims the sovereignty, which he had attributed to him.

(16) *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor him that runneth*, &c. If the ground of the decision or choice of the objects of mercy be in God, as asserted in v. 15, then it is not in man, is a conclusion which flows of course from the previous declaration. The word *it* refers to the result contemplated in the context, viz. the attainment of the divine favour, or more definitely, admission into the Messiah's kingdom. The result, when attained, is to be attributed not to the wishes or efforts of man, but to the mercy of God. That one, therefore, is taken, and another left, that one is introduced into this kingdom and another not, is to be referred to the fact asserted in the preceding verse, that, "God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy." This seems plainly to be the apostle's meaning.

(17) *For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh*, &c. The connexion of this verse is with the 14th, rather than with the one immediately preceding. Paul is still engaged in answering the objection proposed in the 14th verse. There is no injustice with God, because he saith to Moses, 'I will have mercy,' &c. v. 15, and because the Scripture saith to Pharaoh, for this purpose, &c. v. 17. His second answer to the objection is that God, in point of fact, does exercise this sovereignty, as is evident, from the case of Pharaoh. Pharaoh was no worse than many other men who have obtained mercy; yet God, for wise and benevolent reasons, withheld from him the saving influences of his grace, and gave him up to his own wicked heart, so that he became more and more hardened, until he was finally destroyed. God did nothing to Pharaoh beyond his strict deserts. He did not make him wicked; he only forebore to make him good, by the exertion of special and altogether unmerited grace. The reason, therefore, of Pharaoh's being left to perish, while others were saved, was not that he was worse than others, but because God has mercy on whom he will have mercy; it was because, among the criminals at

his bar, he pardons one and not another, as seems good in his sight. He, therefore, who is pardoned cannot say it was because I was better than others; while he who is condemned must acknowledge that he receives nothing more than the just recompense of his sins. In order to establish his doctrine of the divine sovereignty, Paul had cited from Scripture the declaration that God shows mercy to whom he will; he now cites an example to show that he punishes whom he will.

Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up. This is what God said to Pharaoh, as recorded in Ex. 9: 16. The meaning of the declaration may be variously explained. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word used in the passage quoted, means literally, *I have caused thee to stand.* This is understood by some as meaning *I have called thee into existence.* 2. By others, *I have preserved thee.* 3. By others, *I have raised thee up as king.* 4. By others, *I have placed* and *continued thee as my adversary.* Either of these interpretations admits of being defended on philological grounds more or less satisfactory. The fourth, which is only a modification of the second, is perhaps the nearest to the apostle's intention. 'For this purpose have I raised you up, and placed you where you are; and instead of cutting you off at once, have so long endured your obstinacy and wickedness.'

That I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared in all the earth. This is the reason why God dealt with Pharaoh in the manner described. It was not that he was worse than others, but that God might be glorified. This is precisely the principle on which all punishment is inflicted. It is that the true character of the divine lawgiver should be known. This is of all objects, when God is concerned, the highest and most important; in itself the most worthy, and in its results the most beneficent. The ground, therefore, on which Pharaoh was made an object of the divine justice, or the reason why the law was in his case allowed to take its course, is not to be sought in any peculiarity of his character or conduct in comparison with those of others, but in the sovereign pleasure of God. This result of the argument Paul formally states in the next verse.

(18) *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* This is the conclusion, not merely from the preceding verse, but from the whole passage, vs. 14—17. This perfect sovereignty in the selection of the objects of his mercy and of his judgment, Paul had attributed to God in v. 11, and, in the subsequent verses, had proved that he claims and exercises it, both in reference to the recipients of his favour, v. 15, and the subjects of his wrath, v. 17. The doctrine, therefore, is fully established.

The latter clause of this verse, *whom he will he hardeneth*, admits of various explanations. The word may be taken either in its ordinary meaning, or it may be understood in its secondary sense. According to the latter view, it means *to treat harshly, to punish.* This interpretation, it must be admitted, is peculiarly suited to the context, 'He hath

mercy on whom he will, and he punishes whom he will.' Nor is it entirely destitute of philological support. In Job 39 : 16, it is said of the ostrich, "She treateth hardly her young." But, on the other hand, it is liable to serious objections. 1. It is certain that it is a very unusual sense of the word, and opposed to the meaning in which it frequently occurs. There should be very strong reasons for departing from the usual meaning of an expression so common in the Scriptures. 2. It is inconsistent with those passages in the Old Testament which speak of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. 3. It removes no difficulty ; for what, according to the usual sense of the word, is here said, is frequently said elsewhere.

The common sense of the word is, therefore, doubtless to be preferred, *whom he will he hardens.* This is by many understood to express a direct and positive influence of God on the soul in rendering it obdurate. But, in the first place, this interpretation is by no means necessary, as will presently be shown ; and, in the second, it can hardly be reconciled with what the Bible elsewhere teaches of the divine character.

2. Others think that this phrase is to be explained by a reference to that scriptural usage according to which God is said to do whatever, indirectly and incidentally, results from his agency ; on the same principle that a father is said to ruin his children, or a master his servants ; or that Christ is said to produce wars and divisions. Thus, Isa. 6 : 10, the prophet is commanded to make the heart of the people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, &c., as though to him were to be ascribed the incidental results of his preaching. In the same way the gospel is the cause of death (not of misery only, but of insensibility also) to those who hear and disregard it.

3. Nearly allied to this mode of explanation is that which rests on the assumption that God is said to do what he permits to be done. Reference is made to such passages as the following. 2 Sam. 12 : 11, "I will give thy wives unto thy neighbour," i. e. I will permit him to take them. 2 Sam. 16 : 10, "The Lord hath said unto him, curse David." Isa. 63 : 17, "O Lord, why hast thou caused us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear." Deut. 2 : 30, "For the Lord thy God hardened his spirit (Sihon's), that he might deliver him into thy hand." 1 Kings 11 : 23, "The Lord stirred up another adversary." Ps. 105 : 25, "He turned their hearts to hate his people." In 2 Sam. 24 : 1, God is said to have moved David to number the people; but in 1 Chron. 21 : 1, Satan is said to have provoked David to number Israel. From these and similar passages it is evident that it is a familiar scriptural usage, to ascribe to God effects which he allows in his wisdom to come to pass. Hence almost every thing is, at times, spoken of as if it was produced by divine agency, although, in a multitude of other places, these same results are referred, as in some of the examples cited above, to their immediate authors. According to this mode of representation, God is understood as merely

permitting Pharaoh to harden his own heart, as the result is often expressly referred to Pharaoh himself, Exod. 8 : 15, 32, &c.

4. But there seems to be more expressed by the language of the text than mere permission, because it is evidently a punitive act that is here intended, and because this view does not suit the other passages in which God is said to give sinners up to the evil of their own hearts, Rom. 1 : 24, 28. It is probable, therefore, that the judicial abandonment of men "to a reprobate mind," a punitive withdrawing of the influences of his Holy Spirit, and the giving them up to the uncounteracted operation of the hardening or perverting influences by which they are surrounded, are all expressed by the language of the apostle. In this God does no more than what he constantly threatens to do, or which the Scriptures declare he actually does, in the case of those who forsake him; and nothing more than every righteous parent does in reference to a reprobate son. This, in connexion with the principle referred to above (in No. 2), seems as much as can fairly be considered as included in the expressions.

(19) *Thou wilt then say unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?* This is the second leading objection to the apostle's doctrine. If it is true, as he has just taught, that the destiny of men is in the hands of God, if it is not of him who willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy; what can we do? If the fact that one believes and is saved, and another remains impenitent and is lost, depends on God, how can we be blamed? Can we resist his will? To this objection the apostle gives two answers: 1. That it springs from ignorance of the true relation between God and men, as Creator and creatures, and of the nature and extent of the divine authority over us, vs. 20, 21. 2. That there is nothing in his doctrine inconsistent with the divine perfections; since he does not make men wicked, but from the mass of wicked men he pardons one and punishes another, for the wisest and most benevolent purposes, vs. 22, 23.

(20) *Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed,* &c. In these words we have both a reproof and an answer. The reproof is directed against the irreverent spirit whence such cavils always arise. After the clear proof given in the preceding verses, that God claims this sovereignty in his word, and exercises it in his providence, it argues great want of reverence for God to assert that this claim involves the grossest injustice. It is very common with the sacred writers, and with Christ himself, when questions or cavils are presented, to direct their answers more to the feeling which the question indicated, than to the question itself; see John 3 : 3. Matt. 8 : 19, 20, 22. 19 : 16. 22 : 29. But in this case, besides this reproof for a miserable mortal attempting to call his Maker to account, instead of considering that the mere fact that God claims any thing as his right, is evidence enough that it is just, there is a direct answer to the difficulty. The objection is founded on ignorance or misapprehension of the true relation between God and his sinful creatures. It supposes that he

is under obligation to extend his grace to all. Whereas he is under obligation to none. All are sinners, and have forfeited every claim to his mercy; it is, therefore, perfectly competent to God to spare one and not another; to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour. He, as their sovereign Creator, has the same right over them that a potter has over the clay. It is to be borne in mind that Paul does not here speak of the right of God over his creatures as creatures, but as sinful creatures; as he himself clearly intimates in the next verses. It is the cavil of a sinful creature against his Creator, that he is answering; and he does it by showing that God is under no obligation to give his grace to any, but is as sovereign as the potter in fashioning the clay.

Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, *Why hast thou made me thus?* See Isaiah 45: 9. In this clause Paul presents mainly the idea of God's right, and in the subsequent verses he shows that nothing unjust is included in the right here claimed. We are justly in his hands; and it is the height of irreverence and folly for us to call him to account for the manner in which he may see fit to dispose of us.

(21) *Hath not the potter power over the clay, out of the same lump, to make one vessel,* &c. The word rendered *power* means also *authority* and *right.* In this case it means, *the lawful power* or *right;* he not only can do it, but he has a perfect right to do it; see the use of the Greek word in Matt. 21: 23. 1 Cor. 8: 9, and frequently elsewhere. This verse is merely an illustration of the idea contained in the last clause of the preceding. The Creator has a perfect right to dispose of his creatures as he sees fit. From the very idea of a creature, it can have no claim on the Creator; whether it exists at all, or how, or where, from the nature of the case, must depend on him, and be at his sovereign disposal. The illustration of this truth which follows, is peculiarly appropriate. The mass of fallen men is in the hands of God as clay in the hands of the potter, and it is his right to dispose of them at pleasure; to make all vessels unto honour, or all unto dishonour, or some to one and some to the other. These are points on which, from the nature of the relation, we have no right to question or complain.

(22, 23) What *if God, willing to show* his *wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us?* &c. These verses contain Paul's second answer to the difficulty presented in the 19th verse. He had shown in vs. 20, 21, that in virtue of his relation to men as his sinful creatures, God is at perfect liberty to dispose of them at his pleasure, pardoning one and punishing another, as seemeth good in his sight. He now shows that in the exercise of this right there is nothing unreasonable or unjust, nothing of which his creatures have the least right to complain. The punishment of the wicked is not an arbitrary act, having no object but to make them miserable; it is designed to manifest the displeasure of God against sin, and to make

known his true character. On the other hand, the salvation of the righteous is designed to display the riches of his grace. Both in the punishment of the one class, and the salvation of the other, most important and benevolent ends were to be answered. And since for these ends it was necessary that some should be punished, while others might be pardoned, as all are equally undeserving, it results from the nature of the case that the decision between the vessels of wrath and the vessels of mercy must be left to God. The apostle would, moreover, have it remarked that even in the necessary punishment of the wicked, God does not proceed with any undue severity, but, on the contrary, deals with them with the greatest long-suffering and tenderness. Such seems to be the general purport and object of these difficult verses.

The attentive reader will perceive that even with the insertion of the word *what*, which has nothing to answer to it in the original, and with a sign of interrogation at the end of v. 24, the construction of the passage in our version remains ungrammatical and the sense incomplete. As the difficulty exists in the Greek text, and not merely in our translation, the explanations which have been proposed are very numerous. The most natural explanation is the following, 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, bore with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath; (and what if willing) to manifest the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy,' &c. According to this interpretation the second clause of v. 22, and the first clause of v. 23, are co-ordinate, both depending on the beginning of v. 22. 'What right have we to object if God, for the display of his righteous justice, punishes the wicked, and for the manifestation of his glory pardons the vessels of mercy.' This gives a good sense, and one consistent with the context. It assumes, indeed, that the construction of the passage is irregular; but this assumption must be made whatever interpretation is adopted.

The two objects which Paul here specifies as designed to be answered by the punishment of the wicked, are the manifestation of the *wrath of God*, and the exhibition of his power. The word *wrath* is used here as in ch. 1: 18, for the divine displeasure against sin, the calm and holy disapprobation of evil, joined with the determination to punish those who commit it. The power of God is conspicuously displayed in the destruction of the wicked, no matter how mighty or numerous they may be. Though the inherent ill-desert of sin must ever be regarded as the primary ground of the infliction of punishment, a ground which would remain in full force, were no beneficial results anticipated from the misery of the wicked, yet God has so ordered his government that the evils which sinners incur shall result in the manifestation of his character, and the consequent promotion of the holiness and happiness of his intelligent creatures throughout eternity.

God treats the wicked, not as a severe judge, but with much long-suffering. The expression *vessels of wrath* no doubt suggested itself from the illustration of the potter used in the preceding verse; though the term

vessel is used not unfrequently in reference to men, Acts 9: 15. 1 Pet. 3: 7. *Vessels of wrath*, i. e. vessels which deserve wrath, or which are to be objects of wrath; as *vessels of mercy* are those which are to be the objects of mercy; or these phrases may mean *vessels destined to wrath* and *destined to mercy*, corresponding to the expressions *vessels unto honour* and *unto dishonour*, of the preceding verse. This last explanation, on account of the context, seems the most probable.

Fitted to destruction. The word here used admits of being taken either as passive or middle, and may, therefore, be rendered as it is in our version, or *who have fitted themselves* for destruction. If the passive sense be adopted, then the meaning may be, *prepared by God* for destruction; or the participle may be taken rather as a verbal adjective, *fitted for destruction*, expressing merely the idea of being ready for that end. In favour of this latter view, it may be noticed that in the next verse, when speaking of the vessels of mercy, the active voice is used, "which God had before prepared unto glory;" as if designedly to mark the difference between the two cases. If the other explanation (*prepared by God*) be adopted, then, of course, the words must be taken in a sense modified by the nature of the subject, and other passages of Scripture. Wicked men are prepared for destruction by God, not as being created for that purpose, but as being devoted to it on account of their sins, and borne with until they are ripe for their doom. This explanation is adopted not only by the stronger Calvinists, but by many of the neological commentators. There seems, however, no valid objection to the interpretation *prepared* or *fit* for destruction; and which is the rather to be preferred, because the apostle, being here engaged in vindicating the divine proceedings, would naturally speak of the objects of the divine wrath as being fitted for destruction, in the sense of deserving it, &c.

(23) *And that he might make known the riches of his glory*, &c. See the preceding verse for the grammatical connexion of this verse with v. 22. The sense is plain, 'What right have men to complain, if God punishes the wicked, and manifests the riches of his glory on the objects of his mercy?' The word *glory* is used in reference to any thing in God which is the foundation of praise. Hence, it is used for each of his attributes, as, for example, for his power, Rom. 6: 4. John 11: 40; for his mercy, Eph. 3: 16, and here; or for all his attributes collectively, as in 2 Cor. 4: 6, "To give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God," &c. Such, too, may be its force in this passage, as it is not mercy only, but wisdom, power, goodness, &c., which are manifested in the salvation of his people. As the *wrath* and *power* of God are manifested in the destruction of the wicked, so are the *riches of his glory* in the salvation of his people.

On the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory. For the meaning of the phrase *vessels of mercy*, see the preceding verse. The word rendered *he had afore prepared* has this signification frequently; indeed it is its common and proper meaning. Since to *prepare*

beforehand and *to predestine* are very nearly related ideas, the word is also used in this latter sense. Eph. 2: 10, "Which God had before ordained that we should walk in them." This meaning is commonly adopted here, "Which God had foreordained unto glory;' see the parallel passage in Acts 13: 48, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." The other signification of the word, however, gives a very good sense. 'Which he had before prepared, by his providence and grace, unto glory.'

(24) *Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.* We are the vessels of his mercy, even we whom he hath called, i. e. effectually introduced by his Spirit into the kingdom of Christ; see ch. 8: 28, 30. How naturally does the apostle here return to the main subject of discussion! How skilfully is the conclusion brought out at which he has continually aimed! God chose Isaac in preference to Ishmael, Jacob in preference to Esau; it is a prerogative which he claims and exercises, of selecting from among the guilty family of men whom he pleases as the objects of his mercy, and leaving whom he pleases to perish in their sins, unrestricted in his choice by the descent or previous conduct of the individuals. He has mercy upon whom he will have mercy. He calls men, therefore, from among the Gentiles, and from among the Jews, indiscriminately. This is the result at which the apostle aimed. The Gentiles are admitted into the Messiah's kingdom, vs. 25, 26; and the great body of the Jews are excluded, v. 27. This conclusion he confirms by explicit declarations of Scripture.

DOCTRINES.

1. No external circumstance, no descent from pious parents, no connexion with the true church, can secure admission for men into the kingdom of Christ, vs. 6—12.

2. Paul teaches clearly the doctrine of the personal election of men to eternal life, an election founded not on works, but on the good pleasure of God. The choice is *to eternal life*, and not to external privileges merely. 1. Because the very point to be illustrated and established, through this and the two following chapters, is the free admission of men into the Messiah's kingdom and its spiritual and eternal blessings. 2. Because the language of the apostle seems of itself to preclude the other idea, in vs. 15, 16, and especially in v. 18, "Therefore he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth." This is not applicable to the reception of men to a state of peculiar external privileges or their rejection from it. 3. The case of Pharaoh is not an illustration of the refusal to admit some men to peculiar privileges. 4. The choice is between the vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath; vessels of mercy chosen *unto glory*, not unto church privileges, and vessels of wrath who were to be made the examples of God's displeasure against sin. 5. The

character of the objections to the apostle's doctrine shows that such was the nature of the choice.

The election here spoken of is a *choice of individuals*, and not of communities. This appears, 1. Because it is a choice to eternal life. 2. From the cases of Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau, between whom, as individuals, the choice was made. 3. From the illustration derived from the case of Pharaoh. 4. From the objections presented in vs. 14, 19. 5. From the answer to these objections in vs. 15, 16, 20, 23, especially from the passage just referred to, which speaks of the vessels of mercy prepared unto glory; which cannot be applied to nations or communities.

This election is sovereign, i. e. is founded on the good pleasure of God, and not on any thing in its objects. 1. Because this is expressly asserted. The choice between Jacob and Esau was made prior to birth, that it might be seen that it was not founded on works, but on the good pleasure of God, v. 11. The same is clearly stated in v. 16, "It is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;" and also in v. 18, "Therefore he hath mercy on whom he will," &c. The decision rests with God. 2. Because otherwise there would be no shadow of objection to the doctrine. How could men say it was unjust if God chose one and rejected another according to their works? And how could any one object, as in v. 19, 'that as the will of God could not be resisted, men were not to be blamed,' if the decision in question did not depend on the will of God, but on that of men? How easy for the apostle to have answered the objector, 'You are mistaken, the choice is not of God, he does not choose whom he wills, but who he sees will choose him. It is not his will, but man's that decides the point.' Paul does not so answer, but vindicates the doctrine of the divine sovereignty. The fact, therefore, that Paul had to answer the same objections which are now constantly urged against the doctrine of election, goes far to show that that doctrine was his. 3. That the election is sovereign, is taught elsewhere in Scripture. In 2 Tim. 1: 9, it is said to be "not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace." Eph. 1: 5, it is said to be "according to the good pleasure of his will," i. e. his sovereign pleasure. 4. This view alone harmonizes with the doctrine that all good thoughts, and right purposes and feelings, proceed from God, which is clearly taught in the Scriptures. For if the purpose not to resist 'common grace' is a right purpose, it is of God, and, of course, it is of him that one man forms it, and another does not. 5. This doctrine is alone consistent with Christian experience. "Why was I made to hear thy voice?" No Christian answers this question by saying, because I was better than others.

3. The two leading objections against the doctrine of election, viz. that it is inconsistent with the divine character, and incompatible with human responsibility, are answered by the apostle. It cannot be unjust, because God claims and exercises the right of sovereign choice. It is

not inconsistent with human responsibility, because God does not make men wicked. Though, as their Creator, he has a right to dispose of wicked men as he pleases, he only of the same corrupt mass chooses one to honour, and the other to dishonour, vs. 14—23.

4. Scripture must ever be consistent with itself. The rejection of the Jews could not be inconsistent with any of God's promises, v. 6.

5. The true children of God become such only in virtue of a divine promise or by the special exercise of his grace. They are born not of the will of the flesh, but of God, v. 8.

6. Though children prior to birth do neither good nor evil, yet they may be naturally depraved. They neither hunger nor thirst, yet are hunger and thirst natural appetites. They exercise neither love nor anger, yet are these natural passions. They know probably neither joy nor sorrow, yet are these natural emotions, v. 11.

7. The manifestation of the divine perfections is the last and highest end of all things, vs. 17, 22, 23.

8. The fact that the destiny of men is in the hands of God (that it is not of him that willeth, or him that runneth), is not inconsistent with the necessity of the use of means. The fact that the character of the harvest depends on the sovereign pleasure of God, does not render the labour of the husbandman of no account. The same God who says, "I will have mercy on whom I will," says also, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." The sovereignty of God and the necessity of human efforts are both clearly taught in the Scriptures. At times the former, as in this chapter, at times the latter doctrine is most insisted upon. Neither should be forgotten or neglected, as both conspire to produce the right impression on the mind, and to lead us to God in the way of his own appointment, v. 16.

9. Men, considered as the objects of election, are regarded as fallen. It is from the corrupt mass that God chooses one vessel to honour and one to dishonour, vs. 22, 23.

10. The judicial abandonment of men to their own ways, the giving them up to work out their own destruction, is a righteous but dreadful doom, vs. 18, 22, also ch. 1 : 24, 26.

REMARKS.

1. If descent from Abraham, participation in all the privileges of the theocracy, the true and only church, failed to secure for the Jews the favour of God, how foolish the expectation of those who rely on outward ordinances and church relations as the ground of their acceptance! vs. 6—13.

2. The doctrine of the sovereignty of God in the choice of the objects of his mercy should produce, 1. The most profound humility in those who are called according to his purpose. They are constrained to say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory." 2. The liveliest gratitude that we, though so unworthy, should from eternity

have been selected as the objects in which God will display "the riches of his glory." 3. Confidence and peace, under all circumstances, because the purpose of God does not change; whom he has predestinated, them he also calls, justifies, and glorifies. 4. Diligence in the discharge of all duty, to make our calling and election sure. That is, to make it evident to ourselves and others that we are the called and chosen of God. We should ever remember that election is to holiness, and consequently to live in sin is to invalidate every claim to be considered as one of "God's elect."

3. As God is the immutable standard of right and truth, the proper method to answer objections against the doctrines we profess, is to appeal to what God says, and to what he does. Any objection that can be shown to be inconsistent with any declaration of Scripture, or with any fact in providence, is sufficiently answered, vs. 15, 17.

4. It should, therefore, be assumed, as a first principle, that God cannot do wrong. If he does a thing, it must be right. And it is much safer for us, corrupt and blinded mortals, thus to argue, than to pursue the opposite course, and maintain that God does not and cannot do so and so, because in our judgment it would be wrong, vs. 15—19.

5. All cavilling against God is wicked. It is inconsistent with our relation to him as our Creator. It is a manifestation of self-ignorance, and of irreverence to God, v. 20.

6. What proof of piety is there in believing our own eyes, or in receiving the deductions of our own reasoning? But to confide in God, when clouds and darkness are round about him; to be sure that what he does is right, and that what he says is true, when we cannot see how either the one or the other can be, this is acceptable in his sight. And to this trial he subjects all his people, vs. 20—24.

7. If the manifestation of the divine glory is the highest end of God in creation, providence and redemption, it is the end for which we should live and be willing to die. To substitute any other end, as our own glory and advantage, is folly, sin, and self-destruction, vs. 17, 22, 23.

8. The fact that God says to some men, "Let them alone;" that "he gives them up to a reprobate mind;" that he withholds from them, in punishment of their sins, the influences of his Spirit, should fill all the impenitent with alarm. It should lead them to obey at once his voice, lest he swear in his wrath that they shall never enter into his rest, vs. 17, 18.

9. We and all things else are in the hands of God. He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice, vs. 14—24.

CHAP. 9: 25—33.

[25]As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people which were not my people and her beloved, which was not beloved. [26]And it shall

come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. [27]Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: [28]for he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. [29]And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. [30]What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. [31]But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. [32]Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone; [33]as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

ANALYSIS.

The conclusion at which the apostle had arrived in the preceding section was, that God was at liberty to select the objects of his mercy, indiscriminately, from among the Gentiles and Jews. This conclusion he now confirms by the declarations of the Old Testament, according to which it is clear, 1. That those were to be included in the kingdom of God who originally were considered as aliens, vs. 25, 26; and, 2. That, as to the Israelites, only a small portion should attain to the blessings of the Messiah's reign, and, of course, the mere being a Jew by birth was no security of salvation, vs. 27—29. The inference from all this is, that the Gentiles are called, and the Jews, as Jews, are rejected, vs. 30, 31. The reason of this rejection is, that they would not submit to the terms of salvation presented in the gospel, v. 32. As it had been long before predicted, they rejected their Messiah, taking offence at him, seeing in him no form nor comeliness, that they should desire him, v. 33.

COMMENTARY.

(25) The first part of the general conclusion, contained in the 24th verse, is, that the Gentiles are eligible to the blessings of Christ's kingdom. This the apostle confirms by two passages from the prophecies of Hosea, which express the general sentiment that those who, under the old economy, were not regarded as the people of God, should hereafter (i. e. under the Messiah) become his people. The first passage cited is from Hos. 2: 23, which in our version is, "I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to *them which were* not my people, thou art my people." The Hebrew, however, admits of the rendering given by the apostle, as the word translated *to have mercy* may signify *to love*. The difficulty with regard to this passage is, that in Hosea it evidently has reference not to the heathen, but to the ten

tribes; whereas Paul refers it to the Gentiles, as is also done by Peter, 1 Pet. 2: 10. This difficulty is sometimes gotten over by giving a different view of the apostle's object in the citation, and making it refer to the restoration of the Jews. But this interpretation is obviously at variance with the context. It is more satisfactory to say that the ten tribes were in a heathenish state, relapsed into idolatry, and, therefore, what was said of them, is of course applicable to others in like circumstances, or of like character. What amounts to much the same thing, the sentiment of the prophet is to be taken generally, 'those who were excluded from the theocracy, who were regarded and treated as aliens, were hereafter to be treated as the people of God.' In this view, it is perfectly applicable to the apostle's object, which was to convince the Jews that the blessings of Christ's kingdom were not to be confined within the pale of the Old Testament economy, or limited to those who, in their external relations, were considered the people of God; on the contrary, those who, according to the rules of that economy, were not the people of God, should hereafter become such. This method of interpreting and applying Scripture is both common and correct. A general truth, stated in reference to a particular class of persons, is to be considered as intended to apply to all those whose character and circumstances are the same, though the form or words of the original enunciation may not be applicable to all embraced within the scope of the general sentiment. Thus what is said of one class of heathen, as such, is applicable to all others, and what is said of one portion of aliens from the Old Testament covenant, may properly be referred to others.

(26) *And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said to them, ye are not my people*, &c. This quotation is more strictly conformed to the Hebrew than the preceding. It is from Hos. 1: 10. The sentiment is the same as before.

(27, 28) The second part of the apostle's conclusion, v. 24, is that the Jews, as such, were not to be included in the kingdom of Christ, which of course is implied in all those predictions which speak of them as in general cut off and rejected. Two such passages Paul quotes from Isaiah. The first is from Isa. 10: 22, 23. *Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved, for he will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make in the earth.* This passage is nearer the LXX. translation than the Hebrew. The general sense is the same in both, and also in the apostle's version, 'However numerous the children of Israel might be, only a small portion of them should escape the judgments of God.' This being the case, it is evident that the mere being a Jew was never considered sufficient to secure the divine favour. The portion of the prophecy contained in v. 27 is the principal point, 'Only a few of the Jews were to be saved.' What is contained in v. 28 is an amplification, or states the converse of the preceding proposition,

Most of the Jews should be cut off.' The passage in Isaiah, therefore, is strictly applicable to the apostle's object.

(29) The second passage quoted by the apostle is from Isa. 1: 9, *Except the Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, been made like unto Gomorrah.* The object of this quotation is the same as that of the preceding, viz. to show that being Israelites was not enough to secure either exemption from divine judgments, or the enjoyment of God's favour. The passage is perfectly in point, for although the prophet is speaking of the national judgments which the people had brought upon themselves by their sins, and by which they were well nigh cut off entirely, yet it was necessarily involved in the destruction of the people for their idolatry and other crimes, that they perished from the kingdom of God. Of course the passage strictly proves what Paul designed to establish, viz. that the Jews, as Jews, were as much exposed to God's judgments as others, and consequently could lay no special claim to admission into the kingdom of heaven.

Paul here again follows the Septuagint. The only difference, however, is that the Greek version has *a seed*, instead of *a remnant*, as it is in the Hebrew. The sense is precisely the same. The Hebrew word means *that which remains;* and *seed*, as used in this passage, means the seed preserved for sowing. The figure, therefore, is striking and beautiful. *Lord of hosts* is a frequent designation for the Supreme God in the Old Testament. As the word *host* is used in reference to any multitude arranged in order, as of men in an army, of angels, of the stars, or of all the heavenly bodies, including the sun and moon; so the expression *Lord of hosts* may mean Lord of armies, Lord of angels, or Lord of heaven, or of the universe as a marshalled host; see 1 Kings 22: 19, "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him;" 2 Chron. 18: 18. Ps. 103: 21. 148: 2, "Praise ye him, all his angels, praise ye him, all his hosts." In other passages the reference is, with equal distinctness, to the stars, Jer. 33: 22. Deut. 4: 19, and frequently. It is most probable, therefore, that God is called Lord of hosts in reference to his headship over the whole heavens, and all that they contain, Lord of hosts being equivalent to Lord of the universe.

(30) Having proved that God was free to call the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, into his kingdom, and that it had been predicted that the great body of the Jews were to be rejected, he comes now to state the immediate ground of this rejection. *What shall we say then?* This may mean either, 'What is the inference from the preceding discussion?' and the answer follows, 'The conclusion is, the Gentiles are called and the Jews rejected;' or, 'What shall we say, or object to the fact that the Gentiles are accepted,' &c. &c. But the former explanation is better suited to the context, especially to v. 32, and to the apostle's common use of this expression; see v. 14, ch. 7: 7. 8: 31.

That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have at-

tained, &c. The inference is, that what to all human probability was the most unlikely to occur, has actually taken place. The Gentiles, sunk in carelessness and sin, have attained the favour of God, while the Jews, to whom religion was a business, have utterly failed. Why is this? The reason is given in v. 32; it was because they would not submit to be saved on the terms which God proposed, but insisted on reaching heaven in their own way. *To follow after righteousness* is to press forward towards it, as towards the prize in a race, Phil. 3: 14. The word rendered *righteousness*, might more properly be rendered *justification*, the consequence of having fulfilled the law; a state of favour with God. It, therefore, includes all the blessings consequent on union to Christ; see Gal. 2: 21. 3: 21. 5: 5. This the Gentiles did not seek after, they cared nothing about the favour of God and the blessings therewith connected. But still they *attained to righteousness*, i. e. as before, *justification*, all the consequences of being righteous in the estimation of God.

Even the righteousness which is of faith, i. e. even that justification which is attained by faith. In all these clauses, however, the word *righteousness*, as expressing the sum of the divine requisitions, that which fulfils the law, may be retained. 'The Gentiles did not seek this righteousness, yet they attained it; not that righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God (acceptable to God) by faith,' Phil. 3: 9. They obtained that which satisfied the demands of the law, and was acceptable in the sight of God. It is very probable that Paul included both ideas in the word which he used, that is, both the excellence which satisfied the law, i. e. righteousness, and its consequence, i. e. justification.

(31) What the Gentiles thus attained, the Jews failed to secure. The former he had described as "not following after righteousness;" the latter he characterizes as those who *follow after the law of righteousness*. The expression *law of righteousness* may be variously explained. *Law* may be taken in its general sense of *rule*, as in ch. 3: 27, and elsewhere. The meaning would then be, 'They followed after, i. e. they attended diligently to, the rule which they thought would lead to their attaining righteousness or being justified, but they did not attain unto that rule which actually leads to such results.' Or, 2. The word *law* may be redundant, and Paul may mean to say nothing more than that 'The Jews sought righteousness or justification, but did not attain it.' This, no doubt, is the substance, though it may not be the precise form of the thought. In favour of this view is a comparison with the preceding and succeeding verses, and the fact that the word is elsewhere nearly redundant, as "law of sin," ch. 7: 23, for sin itself. The first interpretation, however, is probably the most correct.

(32) The reason why the Jews failed of securing the divine favour is thus stated. *Because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law.* In other words, they would not submit to the method

of justification proposed by God, which was alone suitable for sinners, and persisted in trusting to their own imperfect works. The force of the word rendered *as it were*, may be explained by paraphrasing the clause thus, 'as though they supposed it could be obtained by the works of the law;' (see 2 Cor. 3: 5. 2: 7,) 'They sought it as (*being*) of the works of the law.' *For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.* That is, they did as it had been predicted they would do, they took offence at the Messiah and at the plan of salvation which he came to reveal.

(33) What it was they stumbled at, the apostle declares in this verse, and shows that the rejection of the Messiah by the Jews was predicted in the Old Testament. *As it is written, Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and a rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.* This passage is apparently made up of two, one occurring in Isa. 28: 16, the other in Isa. 8: 14. In both of these passages mention is made of a stone, but the predicates of this stone, as given in the latter passage, are transferred to the other, and those there mentioned omitted. This method of quoting Scripture is common among all writers, especially where the several passages quoted and merged into each other, refer to the same subject. It is obvious that the writers of the New Testament are very free in their mode of quoting from the Old, giving the sense, as they, being inspired by the same Spirit could do authoritatively, without binding themselves strictly to the words. The former of the two passages here referred to, stands thus, in our version, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-*stone*, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste," which is according to the Hebrew. The other passage, Isa. 8: 14, is, "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both houses of Israel."

Isaiah 28, is a prophecy against those who had various false grounds of confidence, and who desired a league with Egypt as a defence against the attacks of the Assyrians. God says he has laid a much more secure foundation for his church than any such confederacy, even a precious, tried corner-stone; those who confided on it should never be confounded. The prophets, constantly filled with the expectation of the Messiah, and, in general, ignorant of the time of his advent, were accustomed, on every threatened danger, to comfort the people by the assurance that the efforts of their enemies could not prevail, because the Messiah was to come. Until his advent, they could not, as a people, be destroyed, and when he came, there should be a glorious restoration of all things; see Isa. 7: 14—16, and elsewhere. There is, therefore, no force in the objection, that the advent of Christ was an event too remote to be available to the consolation of the people, when threatened with the immediate invasion of their enemies. This passage, therefore, is properly quoted by the apostle, because it was intended originally to apply to Christ. The sacred writers of the New Testament so understood and explain it;

see 1 Pet. 2 : 6. Matt. 21 : 42. Acts 4 : 11 ; compare also Ps. 118 : 22. 1 Cor. 3 : 11. Eph. 2 : 20, and other passages, in which Christ is spoken of as the foundation or corner-stone of his church. The same interpretation of the passage was given by the ancient Jews.

The other passage, Isa. 8 : 14, is of much the same character. God exhorts the people not to be afraid of the combination between Syria and Ephraim. The Lord of hosts was to be feared and trusted, he would be a refuge to those who confided in him, but a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to all others. This passage too, as appears from a comparison of the one previously cited with Ps. 118 : 22, and the quotation and application of them by the New Testament writers, refers to Christ. What is said in the Old Testament of Jehovah, the inspired penmen of the New do not hesitate to refer to the Saviour ; compare John 12 : 41. Isa. 6 : 1. Heb. 1 : 10, 11. Ps. 102 : 25. 1 Cor. 10 : 9. Ex. 17 : 2, 7. When God, therefore, declared that he should be a sanctuary to one class of the people, and a rock of offence to another, he meant that he, in the person of his Son, as the Immanuel, would thus be confided in by some, but rejected and despised by others. The whole spirit, opinions, and expectations of the Jews were adverse to the person, character, and doctrines of the Redeemer. He was, therefore, to them a stumbling block, as he was to others foolishness. They could not recognise him as their fondly anticipated Messiah, nor consent to enter the kingdom of heaven on the terms which he prescribed. In them, therefore, were fulfilled the ancient prophecies, which spoke of their rejection of Christ, and consequent excision from the people of God.

DOCTRINES.

1. Exclusion from the pale of any visible church does not of itself imply that men are without the reach of divine mercy, vs. 25, 26.

2. As the world has hitherto existed, only a small portion of the nominal members of the church, or of the professors of the true religion, has been the real people of God, vs. 27, 28, 29.

3. Error is often a greater obstacle to the salvation of men than carelessness or vice. Christ said that publicans and harlots would enter the kingdom of God before the Pharisees. In like manner the thoughtless and sensual Gentiles were more susceptible of impression from the gospel, and were more frequently converted to Christ, than the Jews, who were wedded to erroneous views of the plan of salvation, vs. 30, 31.

4. Agreeably to the declarations of the previous portion of this chapter, and the uniform tenor of Scripture, the ground of the distinction between the saved and the lost is to be found, not in men, but in God. He has mercy on whom he will have mercy. But the ground of the condemnation of men is always in themselves. That God gave his saving grace to more Gentiles than Jews, in the early ages of the church, must be referred to his sovereign pleasure ; but that the Jews were cut off and

perished, is to be referred to their own unbelief. In like manner, every sinner must look into his own heart and conduct for the ground of his condemnation, and never to any secret purpose of God, v. 32.

5. Christ crucified has ever been either foolishness or an offence to unrenewed men. Hence, right views of the Saviour's character and cordial approbation of the plan of salvation through him, are characteristic of those "who are called;" i. e. they are evidences of a renewed heart, v. 33.

REMARKS.

1. The consideration that God has extended to us, who were not his people, all the privileges and blessings of his children, should be a constant subject of gratitude, vs. 25, 26.

2. If only a remnant of the Jewish church, God's own people, were saved, how careful and solicitous should all professors of religion be, that their faith and hope be well founded, vs. 27—29.

3. Let no man think error in doctrine a slight practical evil. No road to perdition has ever been more thronged than that of false doctrine. Error is a shield over the conscience, and a bandage over the eyes, vs. 30, 31.

4. No form of error is more destructive than that which leads to self-dependence; either reliance on our own powers, or on our own merit, v. 32.

5. To criminate God, and excuse ourselves, is always an evidence of ignorance and depravity, v. 32.

6. Christ declared those blessed who were not offended at him. If our hearts are right in the sight of God, Jesus Christ is to us at once the object of supreme affection, and the sole ground of confidence, v. 33.

7. The gospel produced at first the same effects as those we now witness. It had the same obstacles to surmount; and it was received or rejected by the same classes of men then as now. Its history, therefore, is replete with practical instruction.

CHAPTER X.

CONTENTS.

The object of this chapter, as of the preceding and of the one which follows, is to set forth the truth in reference to the rejection of the Jews as the peculiar people of God, and the extension to all nations of the offers of salvation. The first verses are again, as those at the beginning of ch. 9, introductory and conciliatory, setting forth the ground of the rejection of the Jews, vs. 1—4. The next section contains an exhibition

of the terms of salvation, designed to show that they were as accessible to the Gentiles as the Jews, vs. 5—10. The plan of salvation being adapted to all, and God being the God of all, the gospel should be preached to all, vs. 11—17. The truth here taught (the calling of the Gentiles, &c.) was predicted clearly in the Old Testament, vs. 18—21.

CHAP. 10: 1—10.

[1]Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. [2]For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. [3]For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. [4]For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. [5]For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. [6]But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above:*) [7]Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) [8]But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; [9]that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. [10]For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

ANALYSIS.

With his usual tenderness the apostle assures his brethren of his solicitude for their welfare, and of his proper appreciation of their character, vs. 1, 2. The difficulty was, that they would not submit to the plan of salvation proposed in the gospel, and, therefore, they rejected the Saviour. This was the true ground of their excision from the people of God, vs. 3, 4. The method of justification, on which the Jews insisted, was legal, and from its nature must be confined to themselves, or to those who would consent to become Jews. Its terms, when properly understood, were perfectly impracticable, v. 5. But the gospel method of salvation prescribes no such severe terms, it simply requires cordial faith and open profession, vs. 6—10. This, he shows, in the next verse, is the doctrine of the Scriptures, and from it he infers the applicability of this plan to all men, Gentiles as well as Jews.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *Brethren, my heart's desire, and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* As the truth which Paul was to reiterate in the ears of the Jew was, of all others, to them the most offensive, he endeavours to allay their enmity, first, by assuring them of his affection;

and, secondly, by avoiding all exaggeration in the statement of their case. He had no pleasure in contemplating the evils which impended over them, his earnest desire and prayer was *that they might be saved;* literally *to salvation*, as expressing the end or object towards which his wishes and prayers tend; see ch. 6: 22. Gal. 3: 17, and frequent examples elsewhere of this use of the preposition here used.

(2) *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God.* So far from desiring to exaggerate the evil of their conduct, the apostle, as was his uniform manner, endeavoured to bring every thing commendable and exculpatory fully into view. The word *for* has here its appropriate force, as it introduces the ground or reason of the preceding declaration. 'I desire their salvation, *for* they themselves are far from being unconcerned as to divine things.' *Zeal of God* may mean very great zeal, as *cedars of God* mean great cedars, according to a common Hebrew idiom; or *zeal of which God is the object;* the latter explanation is to be preferred. John 2: 17, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." Acts 21: 20, "Zealous of the law." Acts 22: 3, "Zealous of God." Gal. 1: 14, &c. &c. The Jews had great zeal about God, but it was wrong as to its object, and of consequence wrong in its moral qualities. Zeal when rightly directed, however ardent, is humble and amiable. When its object is evil, it is proud, censorious, and cruel. *But not according to knowledge.* Neither enlightened nor wise; neither right as to its objects, nor correct in its character. The former idea is here principally intended. The Jews were zealous about their law, the traditions of their fathers, and the establishment of their own merit. How naturally would a zeal for such objects make men place religion in the observance of external rites; and be connected with pride, censoriousness, and a persecuting spirit. In so far, however, as this zeal was a zeal about God, it was preferable to indifference, and is, therefore, mentioned by the apostle with qualified commendation.

(3) *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not,* &c. The grand mistake of the Jews was about the method of justification. Ignorance on this point implied ignorance of the character of God, of the requirements of the law, and of themselves. It was, therefore, and is, and must continue ever to be a vital point. Those who err essentially here, err fatally; and those who are right here, cannot be wrong as to other necessary truths. The phrase *righteousness of God* admits here, as in other parts of the epistle, of various interpretations. See remarks on ch. 1: 17. The interpretation which best suits this and other similar passages is, *that righteousness of which God is the author;* that which he approves and accepts. The meaning then is, 'Being ignorant of that righteousness which God has provided, and endeavouring to establish their own, they have not submitted to his.' The cause of the rejection of the Jews was their rejection of the method of salvation through a crucified Redeemer,

and their persisting in confiding in their own merits and advantages as the ground of their acceptance with God.

(4) *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* The general import of the passage is sufficiently obvious, but its exact sense is not so easy to determine, on account of the ambiguity of the word translated *end.* The word may signify, 1. *The object to which any thing leads.* Christ is, in this sense, the end of the law, inasmuch as the law was a schoolmaster to lead us to him, Gal. 3: 24; and as all its types and prophecies pointed to him, "They were a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ," Col. 2: 17. Heb. 9: 9. The meaning and connexion of the passage would then be, 'The Jews erred in seeking justification from the law, *for* the law was designed not to afford justification, but to lead them to Christ, in order that they might be justified.' 2. The word may be taken in the sense of *completion* or *fulfilment.* Then Christ is the end of the law, because he fulfils all its requisitions, all its types and ceremonies, and satisfies its preceptive and penal demands. See Matt. 5: 17. Rom. 8: 4. 3. We may take the word in its more ordinary sense of *end* or *termination*, and understand it metonymically for *he who terminates or puts an end to.* The meaning and connexion would then be, 'The Jews mistake the true method of justification, because they seek it from the law, whereas Christ has abolished the law, in order that all who believe may be justified.' Compare Eph. 2: 15, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments;" Col. 2: 14, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us," &c.; Gal. 3: 10—13. Rom. 6: 14. 7: 4, 6, and the general drift of the former part of the epistle. In sense this interpretation amounts to the same with the preceding, though it differs from it in form. Christ has abolished the law, not by destroying, but by fulfilling it. He has abolished the law as a rule of justification, or covenant of works, and the whole Mosaic economy having met its completion in him, has by him been brought to an end. Either this or the first interpretation is probably the correct one. In favour of the former is the ordinary import of the word here used by the apostle; and in favour of the latter is the drift of the early part of the epistle, which was to show that through Christ we are delivered from the law, and introduced into a state of grace. It matters little which view is preferred. The word *law* is obviously here used in its prevalent sense throughout this epistle, for the whole rule of duty prescribed to man, including for the Jews the whole of the Mosaic institutions. The *law* is intended in every sense in which *law* has been fulfilled, satisfied, or abrogated by Jesus Christ. *For righteousness to every one that believeth.* The general meaning of this clause, in this connexion, is, 'So that every believer may be justified.' The Jews, then, did not submit to the method of justification proposed by God, or to the righteousness which he had provided, for they did not submit to Christ, who is the end of the law. He

is that to which the law leads, or he has abolished the law, so that every one that believes may be justified.

(5) *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law.* That is, concerning the righteousness which is of the law, Moses thus writes. In the last clause of the preceding verse it was clearly intimated that faith was the condition of salvation under the gospel. 'To every one, without distinction, that believeth is justification secured.' On this the apostle connects his description and contrast of the two methods of justification, the one by works and the other by faith, with the design to show that the former was in its nature impracticable, while the other was reasonable and easy, and adapted to all classes of men, Jews and Gentiles, and should therefore be offered to all.

The righteousness which is of the law. The word rendered righteousness may here again be variously explained. 1. The method of justification, or of becoming righteous. This suits the context; 'Moses describes the legal method of justification thus.' But this does not agree so well with the clause "which is of the law." 2. It may mean that excellence which arises from obedience to the law, and which is opposed to that which is obtained by faith. The righteousness which is of the law is, then, that which consists in legal obedience. 3. It may have its appropriate and familiar sense, the state of one who is free as to the demands of justice or law. In the former sense it means that which actually answers those demands, in the latter it expresses the condition of one who is just, as in Isa. 5: 23, "Who take the righteousness of the righteous from him." In this view the phrase "righteousness which is of the law," or rather the words thus translated, mean *the justification*, or *state of justification, which arises from the law.* This, then, would be opposed to that which arises from faith. It is evident that this word was of such large import, as used by the apostle, that sometimes one and sometimes another of its phases was in his mind, and that these are changed repeatedly in the same passage. Thus, in the passage before us, it is easy to understand the *righteousness which is of the law*, and *righteousness which is by faith*, as meaning the justifying excellence or merit which is obtained in the one instance from the law, and in the other by faith. But this does not so well answer in the immediately succeeding verse, "The righteousness which is by faith speaketh in this wise;" where the meaning would seem to be, the method of justification by faith says or demands simply cordial belief and open profession. The passage quoted by the apostle is Lev. 18: 5, "The man that doeth those things shall live by them." The language of Moses is an accurate description of the legal method of justification. The man who did all that was required by the Mosaic institutions would, on the ground of his obedience, be rewarded with all the blessings which that economy promised. And the man who should do all that the law of God, by which he is to be ultimately tried, demands, would live on the ground of that obedience. It is plain that the word *live* is used, in its familiar biblical

sense, to denote *a happy existence.* 'He shall be happy, and happy in God. He shall have that life which consists in intercourse with him who is our life.'

(6, 7) *But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not,* &c. On the import of the phrase "the righteousness which is of faith," see the preceding verse. It is clearly implied in that verse that the attainment of justification, by a method which prescribed perfect obedience, is for sinful men impossible. It is the object of this and the succeeding verses to declare that the gospel requires no such impossibilities; it neither requires us to scale the heavens, nor to fathom the great abyss; it demands only cordial faith and open profession. In expressing these ideas the apostle skilfully avails himself of the language of Moses, Deut. 30: 10—14. It is clear that the expressions used by the ancient lawgiver were a familiar mode of saying that a thing could not be done. The passage referred to is the following, "For this command which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." The obvious import of this passage is, that the knowledge of the will of God had been made perfectly accessible, no one was required to do what was impossible; neither to ascend to heaven, nor to pass the *boundless* sea, in order to attain it; it was neither hidden, nor afar off, but obvious and at hand. Without directly citing this passage, Paul uses nearly the same language to express the same idea. The expressions here used seem to have become proverbial among the Jews. To be "high," or "afar off," was to be unattainable: Ps. 139: 6. Prov. 24: 7, "To ascend to heaven," or "to go down to hell," was to do what was impossible, Amos 9: 2. Ps. 139: 8, 9. As the sea was to the ancients impassable, it is easy to understand how the question, 'Who can pass over the sea?' was tantamount to, 'Who can ascend up into heaven?' Among the later Jews the same mode of expressions not unfrequently occur.

Paul connects each of the questions, virtually borrowed from the Old Testament, with a comment designed to apply them more directly to the point which he had in view. *Say not, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down,* &c. The words *that is* may be taken as equivalent to *namely* or *to wit,* and the apostle's comment be connected, as an explanatory substitute, with the questions, 'Say not, Who shall ascend into heaven? to wit, to bring Christ down; or, Who shall descend into the deep? to bring him up again from the dead.' The sense would then be, 'The plan of salvation by faith does not require us to do what cannot be done, and which is now unnecessary; it does not require us to provide a Saviour, to bring him from heaven, or to raise him from the dead; a

Saviour has been provided, and we are now only required to believe,' &c The whole passage is evidently rhetorical and ornate. The simple and obvious design is, as stated above, to declare that the gospel method of salvation demanded nothing but faith and confession.

(8) *But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach.* As the expressions *to be hidden, to be far off*, imply that the thing to which they refer is inaccessible or difficult, so *to be near, to be in the mouth* and *in the heart*, mean to be accessible, easy, and familiar. They are frequently thus used; see Josh. 1: 8, "This law shall not depart out of thy mouth," i. e. it shall be constantly familiar to thee; Ex. 13: 9, "That the law may be in thy mouth;" Ps. 37: 31. 40: 8. The meaning of this passage then is, 'The gospel, instead of directing us to ascend into heaven or to go down to the abyss, tells us the thing required is simple and easy. Believe with thy heart, and thou shalt be saved.' *The word is nigh thee*, i. e. the doctrine or truth contemplated, and by implication, what that doctrine demands. Paul, therefore, represents the gospel as speaking of itself. The method of justification by faith says, 'The word is near thee, in thy mouth, i. e. the word or doctrine of faith is thus easy and familiar.' This is Paul's own explanation. The expression *word of faith* may mean *the word or doctrine concerning faith*, or *the word to which faith is due*, which should be believed. In either case it is the gospel or doctrine of justification which is here intended.

(9) *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus*, &c. The connexion of this verse with the preceding may be explained by making the last clause of v. 8 a parenthesis, and connecting this immediately with the first clause. 'It says, the word is nigh thee; it says, that if thou shalt confess and believe, thou shalt be saved.' According to this view, this verse is still a part of what the gospel is represented as saying. Perhaps, however, it is better to consider this verse as Paul's own language, and an explanation of the "word of faith" just spoken of. 'The thing is near and easy, to wit, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess,' &c. The two requisites for salvation mentioned in this verse are confession and faith. They are mentioned in their natural order; as confession is the fruit and external evidence of faith. So in 2 Pet. 1: 10, calling is placed before election, because the former is the evidence of the latter. The thing to be confessed is that Jesus Christ is Lord. That is, we must openly recognise his authority to the full extent in which he is Lord; acknowledge that he is exalted above all principality and powers, that angels are made subject to him, that all power in heaven and earth is committed unto him; and of course that he is our Lord. This confession, therefore, includes in it an acknowledgment of Christ's universal sovereignty, and a sincere recognition of his authority over us. The necessity of a public confession of Christ unto salvation is frequently asserted in the Scriptures. Matt. 10: 32, "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I con-

fess also before my Father which is in heaven." Luke 12: 8. 1 John 4: 15, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God."

The second requisite is faith. The truth to be believed is, that God hath raised Christ from the dead. That is, we must believe that by the resurrection of Christ, God has publicly acknowledged him to be all that he claimed to be, and has publicly accepted of all that he came to perform., See Rom. 4: 25. 1: 4. Acts 13: 34. 1 Pet. 1: 3—5. 1 Cor. 15: 14, &c. Acts 17: 31. *In thy heart.* Faith is very far from being a merely speculative exercise. When moral or religious truth is its object, it is always attended by the exercise of the affections. The words *in thy heart* are here opposed to the expression *with thy mouth* in the previous clause. Confession must be open; faith must be internal and sincere.

(10) *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* This is the reason why faith and confession are alone necessary unto salvation; because he who believes with the heart is justified, and he who openly confesses Christ shall be saved. That is, such is the doctrine of Scripture, as the apostle proves in the subsequent verse. Here, as in the passage referred to above, in which confession is connected with salvation, it is evident that it must be not only open but sincere. It is not a mere saying, Lord, Lord, but a cordial acknowledgment of him, before men, as our Lord and Redeemer. *Unto righteousness*, or *justification*, i. e. so that we may be justified. And *unto salvation* is equivalent to saying 'that we may be saved.' The preposition rendered *unto* expressing here the *effect* or *result*. Acts 10: 4. Heb. 6: 8. By faith we secure an interest in the righteousness of Christ, and by confessing him before men, we secure the performance of his promise that he will confess us before the angels of God.

DOCTRINES.

1. Zeal, to be either acceptable to God or useful to men, must not only be right as to its ultimate, but also as to its immediate objects. It must not only be about God, but about the things which are well pleasing in his sight. The Pharisees, and other early Jewish persecutors of Christians, really thought they were doing God service when they were so exceedingly zealous for the traditions of their fathers. The moral character of their zeal and its effects were determined by the immediate objects towards which it was directed, v. 2.

2. The doctrine of justification, or method of securing the pardon of sin and acceptance with God, is the cardinal doctrine in the religion of sinners. The main point is, whether the ground of pardon and acceptance be in ourselves or in another, whether the righteousness on which we depend be of ourselves or of God, v. 3.

3. Ignorance of the divine character and requirements is at the founda tion of all ill-directed efforts for the attainment of salvation, and of all false hopes of heaven, v. 3.

4. The first and immediate duty of the sinner is to submit to the righteousness of God; to renounce all dependence on his own merit, and cordially to embrace the offers of reconciliation proposed in the gospel, v. 3.

5. Unbelief, or the refusal to submit to God's plan of salvation, is the immediate ground of the condemnation or rejection of those who perish under the sound of the gospel, v. 3.

6. Christ is every thing in the religion of the true believer. He fulfils, and by fulfilling abolishes, the law, by whose demands the sinner was weighed down in despair; and his merit secures the justification of every one that confides in him, v. 4.

7. Christ is the end of the law, whether moral or ceremonial. To him both, as a schoolmaster, lead. In him all their demands are satisfied, and all their types and shadows are answered, v. 4.

8. The legal method of justification is, for sinners, as impracticable as climbing up into heaven or going down into the abyss, vs. 5—7.

9. The demands of the gospel are both simple and intelligible. The sincere acceptance of the proffered righteousness of God and the open acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Lord, vs. 6—9.

10. The public profession of religion or confession of Christ is an indispensable duty. That is, in order to salvation, we must not only secretly believe, but also openly acknowledge that Jesus is our prophet, priest, and king. Though faith and confession are both necessary, they are not necessary on the same grounds, nor to the same degree. The former is necessary as a means to an end, as without faith we can have no part in the justifying righteousness of Christ; the latter as a duty, the performance of which circumstances may render impracticable. In like manner Christ declares baptism, as the appointed means of confession, to be necessary, Mark 16: 16; not, however, as a *sine qua non*, but as a command, the obligation of which providential dispensations may remove, as in the case of the thief on the cross, v. 9.

11. Faith is not the mere assent of the mind to the truth of certain propositions. It is a cordial persuasion of the truth, founded on the experience of its power or the spiritual preception of its nature, and on the divine testimony. Faith is, therefore, a moral exercise. Men believe with the heart, in the ordinary scriptural meaning of that word. And no faith, which does not proceed from the heart, is connected with justification, v. 10.

REMARKS.

1. If we really desire the salvation of men, we shall pray for it, v. 1.

2. No practical mistake is more common or more dangerous than to suppose that all zeal about God and religion is necessarily a godly zeal. Some of the very worst forms of human character have been exhibited by men zealous for God and his service; as, for example, the persecutors both in the Jewish and Christian churches. Zeal should be according to

knowledge, i. e. directed towards proper objects. Its true character is easily ascertained by noticing its effects, whether it produces self-righteousness or humility, censoriousness or charity; whether it leads to self-denial or to self-gratulation and praise; and whether it manifests itself in prayer and effort, or in loud talking and boasting, v. 2.

3. We should be very careful what doctrines we hold and teach on the subject of justification. He who is wrong here ruins his own soul; and if he teaches any other than the scriptural method of justification, he ruins the souls of others, v. 3.

4. A sinner is never safe, do what else he may, until he has submitted to God's method of justification.

5. As every thing in the Bible leads us to Christ, we should suspect every doctrine, system, or theory which has a contrary tendency. That view of religion cannot be correct which does not make Christ the most prominent object, v. 4.

6. How obvious and infatuated is the folly of the multitude in every age, country, and church, who, in one form or another, are endeavouring to work out a righteousness of their own, instead of submitting to the righteousness of God. They are endeavouring to climb up to heaven, or to descend into the abyss, vs. 5—7.

7. The conduct of unbelievers is perfectly inexcusable, who reject the simple, easy, and gracious offers of the gospel, which requires only faith and confession, vs. 8, 9.

8. Those who are ashamed or afraid to acknowledge Christ before men, cannot expect to be saved. The want of courage to confess is decisive evidence of the want of heart to believe, vs. 9, 10.

CHAP. 10: 11—21.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. 19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you. 20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that

asked not after me. [21]But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

ANALYSIS.

The object of the apostle, in the preceding comparison and contrast of the two methods of justification, was to show that the gospel method was from its nature adapted to all men; and that, if suited to all, it should be preached to all. In v. 11 the quotation from the Old Testament proves two points. 1. That faith is the condition of acceptance, and, 2. That it matters not whether the individual be a Jew or Gentile, if he only believes. For there is really no difference, as to that point, between the two classes; God is equally gracious to both, as is proved by the express declarations of Scripture, vs. 12, 13. If then the method of salvation be thus adapted to all, and God is equally the God of the Gentiles and of the Jews, then, to accomplish his purpose, the gospel must be preached to all men, because faith cometh by hearing, vs. 14—17. Both the fact of the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles, and the disobedience of the great part of the Jews, were clearly predicted in the writings of the Old Testament, vs. 18—21.

COMMENTARY.

(11) *For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.* This passage is cited in support of the doctrine just taught, that faith alone was necessary to salvation. There are clearly two points established by the quotation; the first is, the universal applicability of this method of salvation; WHOSOEVER, whether Jew or Gentile, believes, &c.; and the second is, that it is faith which is the means of securing the divine favour; whosoever BELIEVES on him shall not be ashamed. The passage, therefore, is peculiarly adapted to the apostle's object; which was not merely to exhibit the true nature of the plan of redemption, but mainly to show the propriety of its extension to the Gentiles. The passage quoted is Isa. 28: 16, referred to at the close of the preceding chapter.

(12) *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek*, &c. This verse is evidently connected logically with the *whosoever* of v. 12, '*Whosoever* believes shall be saved, for there is no difference between the Jew and Gentile.' That is, there is no difference in their relation to the law or to God. They are alike sinners, and are to be judged by precisely the same principles (see ch. 3: 22); and consequently, if saved at all, are to be saved in precisely the same way. *For the same Lord over all is rich unto all who call upon him.* This is the reason why there is no difference between the two classes. Their relation to God is the same. They are equally his creatures, and his mercy towards them is the same. It is doubtful whether this clause is to be understood of Christ or of God. If the latter, the general meaning is what has just been stated. If the former, then the design is to declare that the same

Saviour is ready and able to save all. In favour of this latter, which is perhaps the most common view of the passage, it may be urged that Christ is the person referred to in the preceding verse; and, secondly, that he is so commonly called Lord in the New Testament. But, on the other hand, *the Lord* in the next verse refers to God; and, secondly, we have the same sentiment, in the same general connexion, in ch. 3: 29, 30, "Is he the God of the Jews only?" &c. "It is the same God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." *The same Lord over all*, in this connexion, means 'one and the same Lord is over all.' All are equally under his dominion, and may, therefore, equally hope in his mercy. The words *is rich* may be either a concise expression for *is rich in mercy*, or they may mean *is abundant in resources*. He is sufficiently rich to supply the wants of all; whosoever, therefore, believes in him shall be saved.

Unto all who call upon him, i. e. who invoke him or worship him, agreeably to the frequent use of the phrase in the Old and New Testament, Gen. 4: 26. 12: 8. Isa. 64: 7. Acts 2: 21. 9: 14, &c. This religious invocation of God implied, of course, the exercise of faith in him; and, therefore, it amounts to the same thing, whether it is said, 'Whosoever believes,' or 'Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord,' shall be saved. This being the case, the passage quoted from Joel, in the next verse, is equivalent to that cited from Isaiah in v. 11. The meaning, then, of this verse is, 'That God has proposed the same terms of salvation to all men, Jews and Gentiles, because he is equally the God of both, and his mercy is free and sufficient for all.'

(13) *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* As this verse is not introduced by the usual form of quotation from the Old Testament, *as it is written*, or *as the scripture*, or *the prophet saith;* it is not absolutely necessary to consider it as a direct citation, intended as an argument from Scripture (compare v. 11). Yet, as the passage is in itself so pertinent, it is probable that the apostle intended to confirm his declaration that the mercy of God should be extended to every one who called upon him, by showing that the ancient prophets had held the same language. The prophet Joel, after predicting the dreadful calamities which were about to come upon the people, foretold, in the usual manner of the ancient messengers of God, that subsequent to those judgments should come a time of great and general blessedness. This happy period was ever characterized as one in which true religion should prevail, and the stream of divine truth and love, no longer confined to the narrow channel of the Jewish people, should overflow all nations. Thus Joel says, "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," &c., "and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered," Joel 2: 28, 32. Whosoever, therefore, betakes himself to God as his refuge, and calls upon him in the exercise of faith as his God, shall be saved, whether Gentile or Jew (see 1 Cor. 1: 2). This is Paul's doctrine, and the doc-

trine, with one accord, of all the holy men who spake of old, as the Spirit gave them utterance. This being the case, how utterly preposterous and wicked the attempt to confine the offers of salvation to the Jewish people, or to question the necessity of the extension of the gospel through the whole world. Thus naturally and beautifully does the apostle pass from the nature of the plan of mercy, and its suitableness to all men, to the subject principally in view, the calling of the Gentiles, or the duty of preaching the gospel to all people.

(14, 15) *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* &c. &c. Paul considered it as involved in what he had already said, and especially in the predictions of the ancient prophets, that it was the will of God that all men should call upon him. This being the case, he argues to prove that it was his will that the gospel should be preached to all. As invocation implies faith, as faith implies knowledge, knowledge instruction, and instruction an instructor, so it is plain that if God would have all men to call upon him, he designed preachers to be sent to all, whose proclamation of mercy being heard, might be believed, and being believed might lead men to call on him and be saved. This is agreeable to the prediction of Isaiah, who foretold that the advent of the preachers of the gospel should be hailed with great and universal joy. According to this, which is the common and most natural view of the passage, it is an argument founded on the principle that, if God wills the end, he wills also the means; if he would have the Gentiles saved, according to the predictions of his prophets, he would have the gospel preached to them.

(15) *As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.* The word here rendered *preach the gospel*, is the same as that immediately afterwards translated *bring glad tidings*. The word *gospel*, therefore, must be taken in its original meaning, *good news, the good news of peace.* The passage in Isa. 52: 7, which the apostle faithfully, as to the meaning, follows, has reference to the Messiah's kingdom. It is one of those numerous prophetic declarations which announce in general terms the coming deliverance of the church, a deliverance which embraced, as the first stage of its accomplishment, the restoration from the Babylonish captivity. This, however, so far from being the blessing principally intended, derived all its value from being introductory to that more glorious deliverance to be effected by the Redeemer. *How beautiful the feet* of course means, how delightful the approach. The bearing of this passage on the object of the apostle is sufficiently obvious. He had proved that the gospel should be preached to all men, and refers to the declaration of the ancient prophet, which spoke of the joy with which the advent of the messengers of mercy should be hailed.

(16) *But they have not all obeyed the gospel, for Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?* This is a difficult verse, as it is not easy

to see its connexion with the apostle's object. It may be considered as virtually a parenthesis. 'The gospel must be and has been widely proclaimed, though indeed all have not obeyed it, as had been predicted by Isaiah; when he exclaimed, Lord, who hath believed our report?' The word rendered *report* is that which in the next verse is rendered *hearing*. It properly means the *faculty of hearing*, then *something heard*, and thus is put for *discourse*, *doctrine*, or *instruction*.

(17) *So then faith* cometh *by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Though this verse receives its form from the preceding, it is logically connected with vs. 14, 15. The conclusion from what had there been said is, 'Faith is founded on instruction, and this instruction supposes a divine communication.' If men therefore are to believe, they must hear the message of God; and that such a message is delivered of course supposes that God has spoken, and has spoken what is to be delivered, as his word, to all those who are expected to believe. It seems to be the apostle's object to show that such a *report* as could be the ground of faith could only proceed on the basis of a divine communication, and therefore as such *a report* was actually to be made to the Gentiles, it implied that the divine message, the word of God, or the gospel, was designed for them as well as for the Jews.

(18) *But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth*, &c. The concise and abrupt manner of argument and expression in this and the verses which precede and follow, renders the apostle's meaning somewhat doubtful.

Paul's object in the whole context is to vindicate the propriety of extending the gospel call to all nations. This he had beautifully done in vs. 14, 15, by showing that preaching was a necessary means of accomplishing the clearly revealed will of God, that men of all nations should participate in his grace. 'True, indeed, as had been foretold, the merciful offers of the gospel were not universally accepted, v. 16, but still faith cometh by hearing, and therefore the gospel should be widely preached, v. 17. Well, has not this been done? has not the angel of mercy broke loose from his long confinement within the pale of the Jewish church, and made to all nations the proclamation of pardon? v. 18.' This verse, therefore, is to be considered as a strong declaration that what Paul had proved ought to be done, had in fact been accomplished. The middle wall of partition had been broken down, the gospel of salvation, the religion of God, was free from its trammels, the offers of mercy were as wide and general as the proclamation of the heavens. This idea the apostle beautifully and appositely expresses in the sublime language of Ps. 19, "The heavens declare the glory of God, day unto day uttereth speech, there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard, their line is gone through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." The last verse contains the words used by the apostle. His object in using the words of the psalmist was, no doubt, to convey more clearly and affectingly to the minds of his hearers the idea that the pro-

clamation of the gospel was now as free from all national or ecclesiastical restrictions, as the instructions shed down upon all people by the heavens under which they dwell. Paul of course is not to be understood as quoting the psalmist as though the ancient prophet was speaking of the preaching of the gospel. He simply uses scriptural language to express his own ideas, as is done involuntarily almost by every preacher in every sermon.

It will be perceived that the apostle says, "Their *sound* has gone," &c.; whereas in the 19th psalm it is, "Their *line* is gone." Paul follows the Septuagint, which, instead of giving the literal sense of the Hebrew word, gives correctly its figurative meaning. The word signifies *a line*, then *a musical chord*, and then, metonymically, *sound*.

(19) *But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy*, &c. Another passage difficult from its conciseness. The difficulty is to ascertain what the question refers to. Did not Israel know what? The gospel? or the calling of the Gentiles and their own rejection? The latter seems, for two reasons, the decidedly preferable interpretation. 1. The question is most naturally understood as referring to the main subject under discussion, which is, as frequently remarked, the calling of the Gentiles and rejection of the Jews. 2. The question is explained by the quotations which follow. 'Does not Israel know what Moses and Isaiah so plainly teach?' viz. that a people who were no people should be preferred to Israel; while the latter were to be regarded as disobedient and gainsaying.

First Moses says, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are *no people*, &c. The word *first* seems evidently to be used in reference to Isaiah, who is quoted afterward. 'First Moses, and then Isaiah, says,' &c. The passage quoted from Moses is Deut. 32: 21. In that chapter the sacred writer recounts the mercies of God, and the ingratitude and rebellion of the people. In v. 21 he warns them that, as they had provoked him to jealousy by that which is not God, he would provoke them to jealousy by them that are no people. That is, as they forsook him and made choice of another God, so he would reject them and make choice of another people. The passage, therefore, plainly enough intimates that the Jews were in no such sense the people of God as to interfere with their being cast off and others called.

(20, 21) *But Esaias is very bold, and saith*, &c. That is, according to a very common Hebrew construction, in which one verb qualifies another adverbially, *saith very plainly*, or *openly*. Plain as the passage in Deuteronomy is, it is not so clear and pointed as that now referred to, Isa. 65: 1, 2.

Paul follows the Septuagint version of the passage, merely transposing the clauses. The sense is accurately expressed. 'I am sought of *them that* asked not *for me*, I am found of them that sought me not,' is the literal version of the Hebrew, as given in our translation. The apostle quotes and applies the passage in the sense in which it is to be inter-

preted in the ancient prophet. In the first verse of that chapter Isaiah says, that God will manifest himself to those "who were not called by his name;" and in the second he gives the immediate reason of this turning unto the Gentiles, "I have stretched out my hand all the day to a rebellious people." This quotation, therefore, confirms both the great doctrines taught in this chapter; the Jews were no longer the exclusive or peculiar people of God, and the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom were thrown wide open to all mankind. With regard to Israel the language of God is peculiarly strong and tender. *All day long I have stretched forth my hands.* The *stretching forth the hands* is the gesture of invitation, and even supplication. God has extended wide his arms, and urged men frequently and long to return to his love; and it is only those who refuse that he finally rejects.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christianity is, from its nature, adapted to be a universal religion There is nothing, as was the case with Judaism, which binds it to a particular location or confines it to a particular people. All its duties may be performed, and all its blessings enjoyed, in every part of the world, and by every nation under heaven, vs. 11—13.

2. The relation of men to God, and his to them, is not determined by any national or ecclesiastical connexion. He deals with all, on the same general principles, and is ready to save all who call upon him, v. 12.

3. WHOSOEVER will, may take of the water of life. The essential conditions of salvation have in every age been the same. Even under the Old Testament dispensation, God accepted all who sincerely invoked his name, v. 13.

4. The preaching of the gospel is the great means of salvation, and it is the will of God that it should be extended to all people, vs. 14, 15.

5. As invocation implies faith, and faith requires knowledge, and knowledge instruction, and instruction teachers, and teachers a mission, it is evident not only that God wills that teachers should be sent to all those whom he is willing to save, when they call upon him, but that all parts of this divinely connected chain of causes and effects are necessary to the end proposed, viz. the salvation of men. It is, therefore, as incumbent on those who have the power, to send the gospel abroad, as it is on those to whom it is sent, to receive it, vs. 14, 15.

6. As the rudiments of the tree are in the seed, so all the elements of the New Testament doctrines are in the Old. The Christian dispensation is the explanation, fulfilment, and development of the Jewish, vs. 11, 13, 15.

REMARKS.

1. Christians should breathe the spirit of a universal religion. A religion which regards all men as brethren; which looks on God, not as the God of this nation, or of that church, but as the God and father of all;

which proposes to all the same conditions of acceptance, and which opens equally to all the same boundless and unsearchable blessings, vs. 11—13.

2. It must be very offensive to God, who looks on all men with equal favour (except as moral conduct makes a difference), to observe how one class of mortals looks down upon another, on account of some merely adventitious difference of rank, colour, external circumstances, or social or ecclesiastical connexions, v. 12.

3. How will the remembrance of the simplicity and reasonableness of the plan of salvation, and the readiness of God to accept of all who call upon him, overwhelm those who perish from beneath the sound of the gospel! v. 13.

4. It is the first and most pressing duty of the church to cause all men to hear the gospel. The solemn question, implied in the language of the apostle, How CAN THEY BELIEVE WITHOUT A PREACHER? should sound day and night in the ears of the churches, vs. 14, 15.

5. "How can they preach except they be sent?" The failure of the whole must result from the failure of any one of the parts of the system of means. How long, alas! has the failure been in the very first step. Preachers have not been sent, and if not sent, how could men hear, believe, or call upon God? vs. 14, 15.

6. If "faith comes by hearing," how great is the value of a stated ministry! How obvious the duty to establish, sustain, and attend upon it! v. 17.

7. The gospel's want of success, or the fact that few believe our report, is only a reason for its wider extension. The more who hear, the more will be saved, although it be but a small proportion of the whole, v. 16.

8. How delightful will be the time when literally the sound of the gospel shall be as extensively diffused as the declaration which the heavens, in their circuit, make of the glory of God! v. 18.

9. The blessings of a covenant relation to God is the unalienable right of no people and of no church, but can be preserved only by fidelity on the part of men to the covenant itself, v. 19.

10. God is often found by those who apparently are the farthest from him, while he remains undiscovered by those who think themselves always in his presence, v. 20.

11. God's dealings, even with reprobate sinners, are full of tenderness and compassion. All the day long he extends the arms of his mercy even to the disobedient and the gainsaying. This will be felt and acknowledged at last by all who perish, to the glory of God's forbearance, and to their own confusion and self-condemnation, v. 21.

12. Communities and individuals should beware how they slight the mercies of God, and especially how they turn a deaf ear to the invitations of the gospel. For when the blessings of a church relation have once

been withdrawn from a people, they are long in being restored. Witness the Jewish and the fallen Christian churches. And when God ceases to urge on the disobedient sinner the offers of mercy, his destiny is sealed, v. 12.

CHAPTER X.

CONTENTS.

THIS chapter consists of two parts, vs. 1—10, and 11—36. In the former, the apostle teaches that the rejection of the Jews was not total. There was a remnant, and perhaps a much larger remnant than many might suppose, excepted, although the mass of the nation, agreeably to the predictions of the prophets, was cast off, vs. 1—10. In the latter, he shows that this rejection is not final. In the first place, the restoration of the Jews is a desirable and probable event, vs. 11—24. In the second, it is one which God has determined to bring to pass, vs. 25—32. The chapter closes with a sublime declaration of the unsearchable wisdom of God, manifested in all his dealings with men, vs. 33—36. In the consideration of the great doctrinal truths taught in this chapter, Paul intersperses many practical remarks, designed to give these truths their proper influence both on the Jews and Gentiles, especially the latter.

CHAP. 11: 1—10.

[1]I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin. [2]God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, [3]Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. [4]But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of* Baal. [5]Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. [6]And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. [7]What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. [8](According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. [9]And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them: [10]let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

ANALYSIS.

The rejection of the Jews is not total, as is sufficiently manifest from the example of the apostle himself, to say nothing of others, v. 1. God had reserved a remnant faithful to himself, as was the case in the times of Elias, vs. 2—4. That this remnant is saved, is a matter entirely of grace, vs. 5, 6. The real truth of the case is, that Israel as a nation is excluded from the kingdom of Christ, but the chosen ones are admitted to its blessings, v. 7. This rejection of the greater part of the Jews, their own scriptures had predicted, vs. 8—10.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *I say then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid,* &c. When we consider how many promises are made to the Jewish nation as God's peculiar people; and how often it is said, as in Ps. 94: 14, "The Lord will not cast off his people," it is not wonderful, that the doctrine of the rejection of the Jews, as taught in the preceding chapters, appeared inconsistent with these repeated declarations of the word of God. Paul removes this difficulty by showing in what sense the Jews were rejected, and in what way the ancient promises are to be understood. All the Jews were not cast off, and the promises did not contemplate all the Jewish people, as shown above in the ninth chapter, but only the true Israel. There is, therefore, no inconsistency between the doctrine of the apostle, and the declarations of the Old Testament.

There must be an emphasis laid upon the question in this verse, 'Hath God *entirely* cast off his people? or hath God cast off his *whole* people? Has he rejected all? By no means. Such is not my doctrine.' The question may also be understood as meaning, 'Has God cast off his true spiritual people?' But this is not so consistent with the spirit of the passage, nor with the proof, afforded in his own case by the apostle, that the objection suggested by the interrogation was unfounded. The fact that he, a Jew, was not rejected, was evidence rather that the whole nation was not cast off, than that the true Israel were excepted. The distinction between the external and the spiritual Israel seems to be first referred to in the next verse. *For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin;* (see Phil. 3: 5.) The apostle is thus particular in his statement, to make it appear that he was not a mere proselyte, but a Jew by birth, and consequently, as he did not teach his own rejection from the kingdom of God, he could not be understood as teaching that God had cast off all his ancient people.

(2) *God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.* This verse admits of two interpretations. The words *his people* may be understood, as in the preceding verse, as meaning *the Jewish nation*, and the clause *which he foreknew* as by implication assigning the reason for the declaration that God had not cast them off. The clause, according to this view, is little more than a repetition of the sentiment of the pre-

ceding verse. 'The entire and final rejection of the Jews is inconsistent with the fact of their being *foreknown*, or chosen as God's peculiar people.' The second interpretation requires more stress to be laid upon the words *which he foreknew*, as qualifying and distinguishing the preceding phrase, *his people*. 'God has indeed rejected his external people, the Jewish nation as such, but he has not cast away his people whom he foreknew.' According to this view, *his people* means his elect, his spiritual people, or the true Israel. This interpretation seems decidedly preferable, 1. Because it is precisely the distinction which Paul had made, and made for the same purpose, in ch. 9: 6—8. 2. Because this is apparently Paul's own explanation in the sequel. The mass of the nation were cast away, but "a remnant, according to the election of grace," were reserved, v. 5. 3. Because the illustration borrowed from the Old Testament best suits this interpretation.

Which he foreknew. On the different senses of the word rendered *he foreknew*, see ch. 8: 29. Compare Rom. 7: 15. 2 Tim. 2: 19. 1 Cor. 8: 3. Gal. 4: 9. Prov. 12: 10. Ps. 101: 4. 1 Thess. 5: 12. Matt. 7: 23. The examples, however, are numerous and familiar, in which the word which signifies literally *to know*, means *to approve, to regard with affection, to love.* And as to love one more than others involves the idea of selection, so the verb signifies also *to select, determine upon;* see the compound word here rendered *to foreknow*, in Pet. 1: 20. Compare 1 Pet. 1: 2, and other passages quoted on Rom. 8: 29. It depends on the context which sense of the word is to be adopted. The idea of simple prescience obviously does not suit the passage. Others, therefore, prefer rendering the phrase *which he before loved;* others, *which he had chosen.* This idea is included in the other, and is the best suited to the context. 'The people which God foreknew' means, therefore, 'his chosen people;' "the remnant according to the election of grace," i. e. graciously elected; or, as explained in v. 7, "the election," i. e. those who are chosen. The illustration which the apostle cites is peculiarly appropriate. *Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias?* Literally, *in Elias*, i. e. in the section which treats of Elias, or which is designated by his name. Another example of the same method of reference to Scripture is supposed to occur in Mark 12: 26, "In the bush God spake unto him," i. e. in the section which treats of the burning bush. *How he maketh intercession to God against Israel.* The word rendered 'to make intercession' signifies *to approach* to any one, it may be *for* or *against* another; see ch. 8: 26.

(3) *Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars, and I am left alone*, &c.; see 1 Kings 19: 10. Paul gives the sense and nearly the words of the original. The event referred to was the great defection from the true religion, and the murder of the prophets of God, during the reign of Ahab. The circumstance to which the apostle specially refers is, that the prophet considered the defection entire, and

himself the only worshipper of the true God left; whereas, in fact, there were many who remained faithful.

(4) *But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men*, &c.; 1 Kings 19 : 18. *Answer of God, divine response* or *oracle;* see the use of the corresponding verb, Heb. 12 : 25. 11 : 7. Matt. 2 : 12. Luke 2 : 26. Acts 10 : 22. It is probable that the number *seven thousand* is to be taken for an indefinitely large number. Those who remained faithful to God are described as those who did not bow the knee to Baal. This was a Phœnician or Canaanitish deity, frequently worshipped by the idolatrous Hebrews. The word Baal properly means *Lord*, *Ruler*, and probably designates the same deity which among the Chaldeans was called Bel or Belus. The name is almost always masculine. The Septuagint prefix the feminine article to it in Hos. 2 : 8. Jer. 2 : 8. 19 : 5. Zeph. 1 : 4, but in no one of these places is there any thing in the Hebrew to indicate that a female deity is intended. As Paul prefixes the feminine article, it may be explained either by supposing the word for *image* to be understood, as our translators have done and read, "Who have not bowed the knee to *the image* of Baal;" or by taking the word as of the common gender, and used as the name of both a male and female deity. These false gods were either the sun and moon, or the planets Jupiter and Venus.

(5) *Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.* As in the days of Elias there was a number which, although small in comparison with the whole nation, was still much greater than appeared to the eye of sense; so at the present time, amidst the general defection of the Jews, and their consequent rejection as a people, there is a remnant, graciously chosen of God, who are not cast off. The phrase *election of grace*, agreeably to the familiar scriptural idiom, means *gracious election. Gracious*, not merely in the sense of *kind*, but *gratuitous*, *sovereign*, not founded on the merits of the persons chosen, but the good pleasure of God. This explanation of the term is given by the apostle himself in the next verse. *Remnant according to the gracious election* is equivalent to *remnant gratuitously chosen;* see ch. 9 : 11, and vs. 21, 24 of this chapter. Paul, therefore, designs to teach that the rejection of the Jews was not total, because there was a number whom God had chosen, who remained faithful, and constituted the true Israel, or elected people, to whom the promises were made.

(6) *And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.* This verse is an exegetical comment on the last clause of the preceding one. If the election spoken of be of grace, it is not founded on works, for the two things are incompatible. It evidently was, in the apostle's view, a matter of importance that the entire freeness of the election of men to the enjoyment of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, should be steadily kept in view. He would not otherwise have stopped, in the midst of his discourse, to insist so much on this idea.

The latter part of this verse is simply the converse of the former. *But if of works, then it is no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work.* If founded on any thing in us, it is not founded on the mere good pleasure of God. If the one be affirmed, the other is denied. This latter clause is left out of so many of the ancient MSS. and versions, and passed over in silence by so many of the fathers, that the majority of editors are disposed to regard it as spurious. Internal evidence, and a comparison with similar passages, as Rom. 4 : 4. Eph. 2 : 8, 9, are rather in its favour.

(7) *What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for : but the election hath obtained it*, &c. This verse is by many pointed differently, and read thus, "What then? Hath not Israel obtained that which he seeketh for? *nay*, but the election have," &c. The sense is not materially different. The apostle evidently designs to state the result of all he had just been saying. Israel, as a body, has not attained the blessing which they sought, but the chosen portion of them have. The rejection, therefore, is not total, and the promises of God made of old to Israel, which contemplated his spiritual people, have not been broken. It is clear, from the whole discourse, that the blessing sought by the Jews was justification, acceptance with God, and admission into his kingdom; see ch. 10 : 3. 9 : 30, 31. This it is which they failed to attain, and to which the election were admitted. It was not, therefore, external advantages merely which the apostle had in view. *The election* means *those elected ;* as *the circumcision* means *those who are circumcised.*

And the rest were blinded. The verb rendered *were blinded* properly means, in its ground form, *to harden, to render insensible*, and is so translated in our version, Mark 6 : 52. 8 : 17. John 12 : 40. In 2 Cor. 3 : 14, the only other place in which it occurs in the New Testament, it is rendered as it is here. It is used in reference to the eyes in the Septuagint, Job 17 : 7, "My eyes are dim by reason of sorrow." Either rendering, therefore, is admissible, though the former is preferable as more in accordance with the usual meaning of the word, and with Paul's language in the previous chapters. "And the rest were hardened," that is, were insensible to the truth and excellence of the gospel, and, therefore, disregarded its offers and its claims. They were abandoned to the perverseness of their own hearts, and given over to a reprobate mind.

(8) *According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, ears that they should not hear.* This passage, as is the case with ch. 9 : 33, is composed of several found in different places in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 6 : 9, it is said, "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; see ye indeed, but perceive not;" v. 10, "Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears." Deut. 29 : 4, "Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." Isa. 29 : 10, "For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes." The spirit, and, to some extent, the language of these passages,

Paul cites in support of his present purpose. They are in part descriptive of what had occurred in the times of the prophet, and in part of what should occur in aftertimes, and are, therefore, quoted in reference to the character and conduct of the Jews in the days of Christ (see Matt. 13: 14). The import of such citations frequently is, that what was fulfilled in the days of the prophet was more completely accomplished at the time referred to by the New Testament writer. So, in this case, it was more fully accomplished at this period of the Jewish history than at any other, that the people were blinded, hardened, and reprobated. And this the ancient prophets had frequently predicted should be the case. These quotations also serve to show that this hardening, and consequent rejection of the Jews, was an event which, with regard to multitudes, had frequently occurred before, and, therefore, demonstrated that their being cast away militated with none of the divine promises.

God hath given to them. In the Hebrew and Greek of the Old Testament, Isa. 29: 10, it is, "The Lord hath poured upon you." The sense remaining the same. Something more in this connexion is probably intended by this expression than that God permitted them to become hardened and insensible to divine truth. Here, as in ch. 9: 18, the idea probably is, that God judicially abandoned them, withdrawing and withholding the influences of his Spirit, and giving them up to a reprobate mind. The words *even unto this day* may, as by our translators, be connected with the last words of the preceding verse, 'The rest were blinded even unto this day.' Or they may be considered as a part of the quotation, as they occur in the passage in Deut. 29: 4.

(9, 10) *And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap,* &c. &c. This quotation is from Ps. 69: 22, 23. There is nothing in the psalm which forbids its being considered as a prophetic lamentation of the Messiah over his afflictions, and a denunciation of God's judgments upon his enemies. Verse 9, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up," and v. 21, "They gave me vinegar to drink," are elsewhere quoted and applied to Christ. Viewed in this light, the psalm is directly applicable to the apostle's object, as it contains a prediction of the judgments which should befall the enemies of Christ. *Let their table be* is only another and a more forcible way of saying, *their table shall be.* Isa. 47: 5, "Sit thou silent and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans," for 'Thou shalt sit,' &c. And so in a multitude of cases in the prophetic writings. In the psalm indeed, the future form in the Hebrew is used, though it is correctly rendered by the Septuagint, and in our version as the imperative, in these passages. The judgments here denounced are expressed in figurative language. The sense is, their blessings shall become a curse, blindness and weakness, hardness of heart and misery shall come upon them. This last idea is forcibly expressed by a reference to the dimness of vision, and decrepitude of old age; as the vigour and activity of youth are the common figure for expressing the results of God's favour

Even if the psalm here quoted be considered as referring to the sorrows and the enemies of the sacred writer himself, and not to those of Christ, it would still be pertinent to the apostle's object. The enemies of the psalmist were the enemies of God; the evils imprecated upon them were imprecated on them as such, and not as enemies of the writer. These denunciations are not the expression of the desire of private revenge, but of the just and certain judgments of God. And as the psalmist declared how the enemies of God should be treated, how dim their eyes should become, and how their strength should be broken, so, Paul says, it actually occurs. David said, let them be so treated, and we find them, says the apostle, suffering these very judgments. Paul, therefore, in teaching that the great body of the Jews, the rejecters and crucifiers of the Son of God, were blinded and cast away, taught nothing more than had already been experienced in various portions of their history, and predicted in their prophets.

DOCTRINES.

1. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. The people whom God had chosen for himself, he preserved amidst the general defection of their countrymen, vs. 1, 2.

2. The apparent apostasy of a church or community from God is not a certain test of the character of all the individuals of which it may be composed. In the midst of idolatrous Israel, there were many who had not bowed the knee unto Baal. Denunciations, therefore, should not be made too general, vs. 2—4.

3. The fidelity of men in times of general declension is not to be ascribed to themselves, but to the grace of God. Every remnant of faithful men is a remnant according to the election of grace. That is, they are faithful, because graciously elected, v. 5.

4. Election is not founded on works, nor on any thing in its objects, but on the sovereign pleasure of God; and it is not to church privileges merely, but to all the blessings of Christ's kingdom, vs. 6, 7.

5. It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth. Israel, with all their zeal for the attainment of salvation, were not successful, while those whom God had chosen attained the blessing, v. 7.

6. Those who forsake God, are forsaken by God. In leaving him, they leave the source of light, feeling, and happiness, v. 7.

7. When men are forsaken of God all their powers are useless, and all their blessings become curses. Having eyes, they see not, and their table is a snare, vs. 8—10.

REMARKS.

1. As in the times of the greatest defection, there are some who remain faithful, and as in the midst of apparently apostate communities, there are some who retain their integrity, we should never despair of the church, nor be too ready to make intercession agains Israel. The foun-

dation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his, vs. 1—4.

2. Those only are safe whom the Lord keeps. Those who do not bow the knee to Baal, are a remnant according to the election of grace, and not according to the firmness of their own purposes, vs. 5, 6.

3. All seeking after salvation is worse than useless, unless properly directed. Those who are endeavouring to work out a righteousness of their own, or to secure the favour of God in any way by their own doings, are beating the air. Success is to be obtained only by submission to the righteousness of God, v. 7.

4. As the fact that any attain the blessing of God is to be attributed to their election, there is no room for self-complacency or pride; and where these feelings exist, and are cherished in reference to this subject, they are evidence that we are not of the number of God's chosen, v. 7.

5. Men should feel and acknowledge that they are in the hands of God; that, as sinners, they have forfeited all claim to his favour, and have lost the power to obtain it. To act perseveringly as though either of these truths were not so, is to set ourselves in opposition to God and his plan of mercy, and is the very course to provoke him to send on us the spirit of slumber. This is precisely what the Jews did, vs. 7, 8.

6. Men are commonly ruined by the things in which they put their trust or take most delight. The whole Mosaic system, with its rites and ceremonies, was the ground of confidence and boasting to the Jews, and it was the cause of their destruction. So, in our day, those who take refuge in some ecclesiastical organization instead of Christ, will find what they expected would prove their salvation, to be their ruin. So, too, all misimproved or perverted blessings are made the severest curses, vs. 9, 10.

CHAP. 11: 11—36.

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. 12 Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness. 13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office. 14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them. 15 For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving *of them be*, but life from the dead. 16 For if the first-fruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches. 17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were

broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: 21for if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee. 22Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again. 24For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be graffed into their own olive tree. 25For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. 27For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. 28As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes. 29For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance. 30For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. 33O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

ANALYSIS.

As the rejection of the Jews was not total, so neither is it final. They have not so fallen as to be hopelessly prostrated. First, God did not design to cast away his people entirely, but, by their rejection, in the first place, to facilitate the progress of the gospel among the Gentiles, and ultimately to make the conversion of the Gentiles the means of converting the Jews, v. 11. The latter event is in itself desirable and probable. 1. Because if the rejection of the Jews has been a source of blessing, much more will their restoration be the means of good, vs. 12, 15. (The verses 13, 14, are a passing remark on the motive which influenced the apostle in preaching to the Gentiles.) 2. Because it was included and contemplated in the original election of the Jewish nation. If the root be holy, so are the branches, v. 16.

The breaking off and rejection of some of the original branches, and the introduction of others of a different origin, is not inconsistent with this doctrine; and should lead the Gentiles to exercise humility and fear, and not boasting or exultation, vs. 17—22. As the rejection of the Jews

was a punishment of their unbelief, and not the expression of God's ultimate purpose respecting them, it is, as intimated in v. 16, more probable that God should restore the Jews, than that he should have called the Gentiles, vs. 23, 24.

This event, thus desirable and probable, God has determined to accomplish, vs. 25, 26. The restoration of the Jews to the privileges of God's people is included in the ancient predictions and promises made respecting them, vs. 26, 27. Though now, therefore, they are treated as enemies, they shall hereafter be treated as friends, v. 28. For the purposes of God do not alter; as his covenant contemplated the restoration of his ancient people, that event cannot fail to come to pass, v. 29. The plan of God, therefore, contemplated the calling of the Gentiles, the temporary rejection and final restoration of the Jews, vs. 30—32.

How adorable the wisdom of God manifested in the plan and conduct of the work of redemption! Of him, through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen, vs. 33—36.

COMMENTARY.

(11) *I say, then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid*, &c. This verse begins with the same formula as the first verse of the chapter, and for the same reason. As there the apostle wished to have it understood that the rejection of God's ancient people was not entire, so here he teaches that this rejection is not final. That this is the meaning of the verse seems evident, 1. From the comparative force of the words *stumble* and *fall*. As the latter is a much stronger term than the former, it seems plain that Paul designed it should here be taken emphatically, as expressing *irrevocable ruin* in opposition to that which is *temporary*. The Jews have stumbled, but they are not prostrated. 2. From the context; all that follows being designed to prove that the fall of the Jews was not final. This is indeed intimated in this very verse, in which it is implied that the conversion of the Gentiles would lead to the ultimate conversion of the Jews. The word rendered *should fall* is used here, as elsewhere, to mean *should perish, become miserable*, Heb. 4: 11.

But through their fall salvation has come unto the Gentiles. The stumbling of the Jews was not attended with the result of their utter and final ruin, but was the occasion of facilitating the progress of the gospel among the Gentiles. It was, therefore, not designed to lead to the former, but to the latter result. From this very design it is probable that they shall be finally restored, because the natural effect of the conversion of the Gentiles is to provoke the emulation of the Jews. That the rejection of the gospel on the part of the Jews was the means of its wider and more rapid spread among the Gentiles, seems to be clearly intimated in several passages of the New Testament. "It was necessary," Paul says to the Jews, "that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy

of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles," Acts 13: 46. And in Acts 28: 28, after saying that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in their unbelief, he adds, "Be it known, therefore, unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto them."

For to provoke them to jealousy. As the result and design of the rejection of the Jews was the salvation of the Gentiles, so the conversion of the latter was designed to bring about the restoration of the former. The Gentiles are saved in order to provoke the Jews to jealousy. That is, this is one of the many benevolent purposes which God designed to accomplish by that event. This last clause serves to explain the meaning of the apostle in the former part of the verse. He shows that the rejection of the Jews was not intended to result in their being finally cast away, but to secure the more rapid progress of the gospel among the heathen, in order that their conversion might react upon the Jews, and be the means of bringing all, at last, within the fold of the Redeemer.

(12) *Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?* Although there is considerable difficulty in fixing the precise sense of the several clauses of this verse, its general meaning seems sufficiently obvious. 'If the rejection of the Jews has been the occasion of so much good to the world, how much more may be expected from their restoration.' In this view it bears directly upon the apostle's object, which, in the first place, is to show that the restoration of the Jews is a probable and desirable event. There is in the verse a twofold annunciation of the same idea. In the first, the sentence is incomplete. 'If the fall of them be the riches of the world, *how much more their recovery?* if their diminishing, how much more their fulness?' The principal difficulty in this passage results from the ambiguity of the words rendered *diminishing* and *fulness*. The former properly means, *inferiority, a state* or *condition worse than that of others*, or *worse than a former one.* This sense suits the present passage. 'If their misfortune, or loss of former advantages, was a source of good; how much more their fulness?'

The word rendered *fulness* has various senses in the New Testament. It properly means *that with which any thing is filled*, as in the frequent phrase *the fulness of the earth*, or *of the sea*, &c. So *fulness of the Godhead*, all that is in God, *the plenitude of Deity.* It then naturally is used for *the fulness* or *abundance of blessings that is in any one.* John 1: 16, "Of his fulness have all we received;" Eph. 3: 19, "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Thirdly, it means *abundance, multitude*, especially when followed by a genitive expressing the particulars of which the multitude consists, as *fulness of the Gentiles*, i. e. the multitude of the Gentiles, v. 25 of this chapter. It also means *the complement* or *supplement of any thing, the remaining part;* see Matt. 9: 16. So in Eph. 1: 23, the church may be called *the fulness* of Christ because he is the head, the church is the residue, or complement,

by which the mystical body is completed. Of these several meanings, that which best suits this passage is, fulness of blessings, or full blessedness; i. e. their restoration to the full enjoyment of all their former privileges. 'If the loss or ruin of the Jews has been the occasion of good to the Gentiles, how much more shall their full blessedness, or complete restoration, be.'

(13) *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles.* This and the following verse, without being strictly a parenthesis, contain a transient remark relating to the apostle's own feelings and mode of acting in reference to the subject in hand. This passage is connected with the last clause of the preceding verse, in which Paul had said that the conversion of the Gentiles was adapted and designed to bring about the restoration of the Jews. These two events, instead of being at all inconsistent, were intimately related, so that both ought to be kept constantly in view, and all efforts to promote the former had a bearing on the accomplishment of the latter. This being the case, the Gentiles ought to consider the restoration of the Jews as in no respect inimical to their interests, but as on every account most desirable. Paul, therefore, says that what he had just stated in reference to the effect on the Jews, of the conversion of the Gentiles, he designed specially for the latter; he wished them to consider that fact, as it would prevent any unkind feelings towards the Jews. He had the better right thus to speak, as to him especially "the gospel of the uncircumcision had been committed." He himself, in all he did to secure the salvation of the Gentiles, or to render his office successful, had an eye to the conversion of the Jews. The word rendered *I magnify* means first *to praise, to estimate and speak highly of a thing*; secondly, *to render glorious*, as ch. 8: 30, "Whom he justifies them he also glorifies;" and so in a multitude of cases. Either sense of the word suits this passage. The latter, however, is much better adapted to the following verse, and, therefore, is to be preferred, 'I endeavour to render my office glorious by bringing as many Gentiles as possible into the Redeemer's kingdom; if so be it may provoke and arouse my countrymen.' The object of the apostle, therefore, in these verses, is to declare that he always acted under the influence of the truth announced at the close of the twelfth verse. He endeavoured to make the conversion of the Gentiles a means of good to the Jews.

(14) *If by any means I may provoke to emulation them* which are *my flesh, and might save some of them.* This is the reason (of course one among many) why Paul desired the conversion of the Gentiles. If the two events, the salvation of both classes, were intimately related, there was no ground of jealousy on either part. The Gentiles need not fear that the restoration of the Jews would be injurious to them, as though the happiness of one class were incompatible with that of the other.

(15) *For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world,*

what shall *the receiving* of them be *but life from the dead?* Although Paul here returns to the sentiment of the 12th verse, this passage is logically connected with the preceding. The apostle had said, that even in labouring for the Gentiles, he had in view the salvation of the Jews, for if their rejection had occasioned so much good, how desirable must be their restoration. *If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world.* The reconciliation here spoken of is that which Paul so fully describes in Eph. 2 : 11—22. A reconciliation by which those who were aliens and strangers have been brought nigh; reconciled at once to the church, the commonwealth of Israel, and to God himself, "by the blood of Christ." This event has been facilitated, as remarked above, by the rejection of the Jews, what will the restoration of the Jews then be, *but life from the dead?* That is, it will be a most glorious event; as though a new world had risen; it will therefore be an event, not only glorious in itself, but in the highest degree beneficial for the Gentiles.

(16) *For if the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy, and if the root be holy, so also are the branches.* Under two striking and appropriate figures, the apostle expresses the general idea, 'If one portion of the Jewish people is holy, so also is the other.' With regard to this interesting passage, the first point to be settled is the allusion in the figurative expression in the first clause. The Jews were commanded to offer a certain portion of all the productions of the earth to God, as an expression of gratitude and acknowledgment of dependence. This offering, called the first-fruits, was to be made, first, from the productions in their natural state (Ex. 23 : 19); and, secondly, from the meal, wine, oil, and dough, as prepared for use. Num. 15 : 20, "Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the Lord a heave-offering in all your generations;" Neh. 10 : 37. Deut. 18 : 14. The allusion is here probably to the latter of these offerings, as the word *lump* cannot so well refer to the mass of grains as to the mass of dough from which the first-fruits were taken.

By the first-fruits and the root are to be understood the source of the Jewish people, i. e. their ancestors; and by the lump and branches the residue of the nation. The meaning, therefore, is, 'If the ancestors of the Jews were holy, so are their descendants.' The word *holy* does not in this case mean *morally pure*, but *consecrated*, separated to the special service of God. The word is used in this sense in a multitude of cases in the Old Testament, and is applied to any person, place, or thing set apart for the service of God. It is used in the same sense in the New Testament also: see Matt. 4 : 5. 7 : 6. Luke 2 : 23. 1 Cor. 7 : 14. The Jews, therefore, in this passage are called *holy*, because peculiarly consecrated to God, separated from the rest of the world as his chosen people.

The connexion of this verse with the preceding, its import and bearing on the apostle's object is therefore clear. The restoration of the Jews, which will be attended with such beneficial results for the whole world, is to be expected, because of their peculiar relation to God as his chosen

people. God, in selecting the Hebrew patriarchs and setting them apart for his service, had reference to their descendants as well as to themselves, and designed that the Jews as a people should, to the latest generations, be specially devoted to himself. They stand now, therefore, and ever have stood, in a relation to God, which no other nation ever has sustained; and, in consequence of this relation, their restoration to the divine favour is an event in itself probable, and one, which Paul afterwards teaches (v. 25), God has determined to accomplish.

(17—24) The object of these verses is to make such an application of the truths which Paul had just taught as should prevent any feeling of exultation or triumph of the Gentile Christians over the Jews. It is true that the Jews have been partially rejected from the church of God, that the Gentiles have been introduced into it, and that the Jews are ultimately to be restored: these things, however, afford no ground of boasting to the Gentiles, but rather cause of thankfulness and caution. Paul illustrates these truths by a very appropriate figure.

(17) *And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them*, &c. The purport of this passage is plain. Some of the Jews were broken off and rejected; the Gentiles, though apparently little susceptible of such a blessing, were introduced into the church, and made to partake of all its peculiar and precious privileges. The Jewish church is compared to the olive tree, one of the most durable, productive, and valuable of the productions of the earth, because it was highly favoured, and, therefore, valued in the sight of God. The Gentiles are compared to the wild olive, one of the most worthless of trees, to express the degradation of their state, considered as estranged from God. As it is customary to ingraft good scions on inferior stocks, the nature of the product bring determined by the graft and not the root, it has been thought that the illustration of the apostle is not very apposite. But the difficulty may result from pressing the comparison too far. The idea may be simply this, 'as the scion of one tree is ingrafted into another, and has no independent life, but derives all its vigour from the root, so the Gentiles are introduced among the people of God, not to confer but to receive good.' It is, however said, on the authority of ancient writers and of modern travellers, to have been not unusual to graft the wild on the cultivated olive.

It is plain from this verse that *the root* in this passage cannot be the early converts from among the Jews, but the ancient covenant people of God. The ancient theocracy was merged in the kingdom of Christ. The latter is but an enlargement and elevation of the former. There has, therefore, never been other than one family of God on earth, existing under different institutions, and enjoying different degrees of light and favour. This family was composed of old of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their descendants. At the advent its name and circumstances were changed, many of its old members were cast out, and others introduced,

but it is the same family still. Or, to return to the apostle's illustration, it is the same tree, some of the branches only being changed.

(18) *Boast not thyself against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.* The truth which the apostle had just taught, that the Jews were the channel of blessings to the Gentiles, and not the reverse, was adapted to prevent all ungenerous and self-confident exultation of the latter over the former.

(19) *Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in.* The Gentiles are not authorized to infer from the fact that the Jews were rejected and they chosen, that this occurred on the ground of their being in themselves better than the Jews. The true reason of this dispensation is assigned in the next verse.

(20) *Well, because of unbelief they were broken off,* &c. The fact that they were broken off is admitted, but the inference impliedly drawn by the Gentiles is denied. It was not for any personal considerations that the one was rejected and the other chosen. The Jews were rejected because they rejected the Saviour, and the only tenure by which the advantages of a covenant relation to God can be retained is faith. The Gentiles, therefore, will not be secure because Gentiles, any more than the Jews were safe because Jews. Instead therefore of being high-minded, they should fear.

(21) *If God spared not the natural branches,* take heed *lest he also spare not thee.* The Gentile has even more reason to fear than the Jew had. It was in itself far more probable that God would spare a people so long connected with him in the most peculiar manner, than that he will spare those who have no such claims on his mercy. The idea intended to be expressed by this verse probably is, that the Jews, from their relation to God, were more likely to be spared than the Gentiles, inasmuch as God is accustomed to bear long with the recipients of his mercy before he casts them off; even as a father bears long with a son before he discards him and adopts another.

(22) *Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell severity; but on thee goodness.* The effect, which the consideration of these dispensations of God should produce, is gratitude and fear. Gratitude, in view of the favour which we Gentiles have received, and fear lest we should be cut off; for our security does not depend upon our now enjoying the blessings of the church of God, but is dependent on our *continuing in the divine goodness or favour* (Rom. 3: 4. Tit. 3: 4), that is, on our doing nothing to forfeit that favour; its continuance being suspended on the condition of our fidelity. There is no promise or covenant on the part of God securing to the Gentiles the enjoyment of these blessings through all generations, any more than there was any such promise to protect the Jews from the consequences of their unbelief. The continuance of these favours depends on the conduct of each successive generation. Paul, therefore, says to the Gentile that he must continue in the divine favour, "otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

(23) *And they also, if they bide not in unbelief, shall be graffed in,* &c. The principle which the apostle had just stated as applicable to the Gentiles, is applicable also to the Jews. Neither one nor the other, simply because Jew or Gentile, is either retained in the church, or excluded from it. As the one continues in this relation to God, only on condition of faith; so the other is excluded by his unbelief alone. Nothing but unbelief prevents the Jews being brought back, "for God is able to graff them in again." That is, not merely has God the power to accomplish this result, but the difficulty or impediment is not in him, but solely in themselves. There is no inexorable purpose in the divine mind, nor any insuperable obstacle in the circumstances of the case, which forbids their restoration; on the contrary, the event is, in itself considered, far more probable than the calling of the Gentiles.

(24) *For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more,* &c. The simple meaning of this verse is, that the future restoration of the Jews is, in itself, a more probable event than the introduction of the Gentiles into the church of God. This, of course, supposes that God regarded the Jews, on account of their relation to him, with peculiar favour, and that there is still something in their relation to the ancient servants of God and his covenant with them, which causes them to be regarded with special interest. As men look upon the children of their early friends with kinder feelings than on the children of strangers, God refers to this fact to make us sensible that he still retains purposes of peculiar mercy towards his ancient people. The restoration of this people, therefore, to the blessings of the church of God is far from being an improbable event.

(25) *For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part has happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.* Paul, having shown that the restoration of the Jews is a probable and desirable event, in this passage declares that God has determined to accomplish it. *I would not have you ignorant,* is a form of expression which he often uses when he wishes to call the attention of his readers to something of special importance. The word *mystery,* in the scriptural sense of the term, does not mean something incomprehensible, but something hidden, or previously unknown, and which can only be discovered by divine revelation. In this sense the whole gospel is called a mystery, Rom. 16: 25. 1 Cor. 2: 7. 4: 1. Eph. 6: 19; or any single doctrine, however simple, may be so called; see Eph. 3: 4. The use of this word shows that Paul meant in this verse to declare a fact which was undiscoverable by human reason, one which could be known only when revealed. Such an event is the future restoration of the Jews.

Lest ye should be wise in your own conceits. This is given as the reason why the apostle wished the Gentiles to know and consider the event which he was about to announce. This clause may mean either,

'Lest ye proudly imagine that your own ideas of the destiny of the Jews are correct;' or, 'Lest ye be proud and elated, as though you were better and more highly favoured than the Jews.' The former is perhaps most in accordance with the literal meaning of the words; see Proverbs 3: 7.

Blindness in part, i. e. partial blindness; *partial* as to its extent and continuance; because not all the Jews were thus blinded, nor were the nation to remain blind for ever. The word rendered *blindness* is more correctly rendered, in Mark 3: 5, *hardness;* compare Eph. 4: 18; see v. 7, and ch. 9: 18.

Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. See v. 12 for the various meanings of the word rendered *fulness*. The sense which best suits this passage is *multitude;* see Gen. 48: 19, "His seed shall become a multitude of nations;" and Isa. 31: 4, where, in Hebrew, the word for *fulness* is used. The clause then means, 'Until the multitude of the Gentiles be converted.' It does not necessarily imply that all the Gentiles are to be thus brought in before the conversion of the Jews occurs, but that this latter event was not to take place until a great multitude of the Gentiles had entered into the kingdom of Christ. The meaning then of this interesting passage is, that the partial blindness of the Jews is to continue until the conversion of the fulness of the Gentiles, and then, as stated in the next verse, they are to be brought again into the kingdom of God.

(26) *And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written.* Israel here, from the context, must mean the Jewish people, and *all Israel* the whole nation, in opposition to the part spoken of above. Now, part of the Jewish people is rejected; then, the whole shall be gathered in. The nation, as such, shall acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, and be admitted into his kingdom.

In support of this declaration, Paul appeals to a prediction in Isa. 59: 20, *There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.* The apostle's version of this passage agrees neither with the Hebrew nor the Septuagint. It differs, however, but little from the latter. Instead of *out of Zion*, the Greek version has *for the sake of Zion*, and the English, *to Zion.* The last is the most literal, the second is also correct, but the first (*out of Zion*) is not consistent with the force of the Hebrew preposition used by Isaiah. It is most probable, therefore, that the apostle borrowed those words from Ps. 14: 7. In the latter part of the verse the departure from the Hebrew is more serious. In our version we have a literal translation of the Hebrew, "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." Paul follows the Septuagint, with which also the Chaldee paraphrase agrees. This agreement of the ancient versions has led critics to suppose that the ancient translators found a different reading in the Hebrew text from that which we have at present. This is the more probable, because the Hebrew phrase, as it now stands, is very unusual, *to*

the converts of transgressions. But even according to the present text, the passage contains the general meaning which the apostle attributes to it. 'The Goël, the deliverer, should come for the salvation of Zion.'

The apostle informs us that the deliverance which God promised to effect, and which is spoken of by the prophet in the passage above cited, included much more than the conversion of the few Jews who believed in Christ at the advent. The full accomplishment of the promise, that he should turn away ungodliness from Jacob, contemplated the conversion of the whole nation as such to the Lord. We are, of course, bound to receive the apostle's interpretation as correct, and there is the less difficulty in this, as there is nothing in the original passage at all incompatible with it, and as it accords with the nature of God's covenant with his ancient people.

(27) *For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.* This verse is not a quotation from any one passage in the Old Testament, but rather a declaration, on the part of the apostle, of the purport of God's promises or covenant with his people. The first clause occurs in Isa. 59: 21, immediately after the passage quoted above, and also in Jer. 31: 33. The latter clause may be considered either as the substance of the passage in Jeremiah, or as borrowed from Isa. 27: 9, where, in the Septuagint, these same words occur. In either case the general idea is the same. 'The promise of God contemplated the taking away of the sins of his covenant people, and their consequent restoration to his favour.' The words *when I shall take away their sins* may, according to the context, mean either, *when I have punished their sins:* or, *when I have removed them.* Neither is inconsistent with the context in this case, as the apostle may mean that God would restore the Jews after he had punished them for their iniquities, or when he had converted them from their unbelief; see Isa. 4: 4.

(28) *As concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.* In this and the few following verses, the apostle sums up what he had previously taught. The Jews, he says, were now, as far as the gospel was concerned, regarded and treated as enemies for the benefit of the Gentiles, but, in reference to the election, they were still regarded as the peculiar people of God on account of their connexion with the patriarchs. *They are enemies*, whether of the gospel, of the apostle, or of God, is not expressed, and, therefore, depends on the context. Each view of the clause has its advocates; the last is the correct one, because they are *enemies* to him, by whom, on one account, they are *beloved.* The word may be taken actively or passively. They are inimical to God, or they are regarded and treated as enemies by him. The latter best suits the context. They are now aliens from their own covenant of promise.

As concerning the gospel, that is, the gospel is the occasion of their being regarded as enemies. This is explained by a reference to vs. 11, 15 By their punishment the progress of the gospel has been facilitated

among the Gentiles; and, therefore, the apostle says, it is *for your sakes* they are thus treated. On the other hand, as it regards *the election* or the covenant of God, they are still regarded with peculiar favour, because descended from those patriarchs to whom and to whose seed the promises were made. This is but expressing in a different form the idea which the apostle had previously presented, viz. that the covenant made with Abraham was inconsistent with the final rejection of the Jews as a people. God foresaw and predicted their temporary defection and rejection from his kingdom, but never contemplated their being for ever excluded; see vs. 16, 25—27.

(29) *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* God is not a man that he should change. Having chosen the Jews as his people, the purpose which he had in view in that choice can never be altered; and as it was his purpose that they should ever remain his people, their future restoration to his favour and kingdom is certain. Having previously explained the nature of God's covenant with his ancient people, Paul infers from the divine character that it will be fully accomplished. *Calling* is equivalent to *election* as appears from the context, the one word being substituted for the other, and also from the use of the cognate terms, (see ch. 8: 28. 1: 7, &c. &c.) The general proposition of the apostle, therefore, is, that the purposes of God are unchangeable; and, consequently, those whom God has chosen for any special benefit cannot fail to attain it.

(30, 31) *For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so,* &c. These verses contain a repetition and confirmation of the previous sentiment. The cases of the Gentiles and Jews are very nearly parallel. Formerly the Gentiles were disbelieving, yet the unbelief of the Jews became the occasion of their obtaining mercy; so now, though the Jews are disobedient, the mercy shown to the Gentiles is to be the means of their obtaining mercy. As the gospel came from the Jews to the Gentiles, so is it to return from the Gentiles to the Jews. Paul had before stated how the unbelief of the Israelites was instrumental in promoting the salvation of other nations, and how the conversion of the Gentiles was to react upon the Jews.

The 31st verse is thus rendered in our translation, and, no doubt, correctly. *Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.* The particle rendered *that*, expresses here the result rather than the design. They now are disbelieving, not *in order that* they might obtain mercy through your mercy; but such is the result. *Through your mercy.* The dative, in which form the words thus translated occur, here, as in v. 30 and often elsewhere, expresses the cause or occasion. Paul had repeatedly remarked that the conversion of the Gentiles was to be the occasion of the restoration of the Jews, as the disbelief of the latter had been the occasion of good to the former. And this seems obviously his meaning here, from the opposition between the phrases *their unbelief* and *your mercy.*

(32) *For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.* The word rendered *hath concluded*, means *hath delivered over to the power of.* Ps. 31 : 8, "Thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy;" Ps. 78 : 50, "He gave their life over to the pestilence." In both these cases the Septuagint employ the word here used by the apostle. So, too, Gal. 3 : 22, "The scripture hath concluded all under sin," i. e. declared all to be delivered up to the power of sin. The meaning of the passage, therefore, is, that God has delivered all men unto unbelief, i. e. has permitted all thus to sin; or has delivered them over, in the sense in which, in ch. 1 : 28, he is said to deliver men up to the evil of their own hearts. The object of Paul seems to be to direct the attention of his readers to the fact that God's dealings with men, Jews and Gentiles, had been such as to place them upon the same ground. Both were dependent on sovereign mercy. Both had sunk into a state whence no effort and no merit of their own could redeem them, and whence, if saved at all, it must be by grace. As, therefore, all men had forfeited every claim to the divine mercy, and all were in the same condition of unbelief, God had determined to display his goodness by having mercy upon all (that is, upon the Jews as well as the Gentiles), and thus bring all ultimately to one fold, under one Shepherd.

(33—36) The apostle having finished his exhibition of the plan of redemption, having presented clearly the doctrine of justification, sanctification, the certainty of salvation to all believers, election, the calling of the Gentiles, the present rejection and final restoration of the Jews, in view of all the wonders and all the glories of the divine dealings with men, pours forth this sublime and affecting tribute to the wisdom, goodness, and sovereignty of God. Few passages, even in the Scriptures, are to be compared with this, in the force with which it presents the idea that God is all, and man is nothing. The principal ideas presented in this passage are, 1. The incomprehensible character and infinite excellence of the divine Nature and dispensations, v. 33. 2. His entire independence of man, vs. 34, 35. 3. His comprehending all things within himself; being the source, the means, and the end of all, v. 35.

(33) *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out!* Although it is not probable that, in such a passage, every word was designed to be taken in a very precise and definite sense, yet it is likely that Paul meant to express different ideas by the terms *wisdom* and *knowledge*, because both are so wonderfully displayed in the work of redemption, of which he had been speaking. All-comprehending knowledge, which surveyed all the subjects of this work, all the necessities and circumstances of their being, all the means requisite for the accomplishment of the divine purpose, and all the results of those means from the beginning to the end. Infinite wisdom, in selecting and adapting the means to the object in view, in the ordering of the whole scheme of creation, providence, and redemption, so that the glory of God,

and the happiness of his creatures are, and are to be, wonderfully promoted. *His judgments are unsearchable.* That is, his decisions, purposes, or decrees. Ps. 119 : 75. In this sense this clause differs from the following. The plans and purposes of God are unsearchable, and *his ways*, his methods of executing them, are incomprehensible. Or both clauses may be understood as containing the same general idea, God's dealings are beyond the comprehension of mortals.

(34) *For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Who hath been his counsellor?* See Isa. 40 : 13. Jer. 23 : 18. This and the following verse confirm the declaration of the preceding, and assert the entire independence of God. His judgments and ways are unsearchable, for who has ever entered into his counsel, or known his purposes? He derives knowledge from none of his creatures, but is in this, as in all things else, independent of them all.

(35) *Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* This is not to be confined to giving counsel or knowledge to God, but expresses the general idea that the creature can do nothing to place God under obligation. It will be at once perceived how appropriate is this thought, in reference to the doctrines which Paul had been teaching. Men are justified, not on the ground of their own merit, but of the merit of Christ; they are sanctified, not by the power of their own good purposes, and the strength of their own will, but by the Spirit of God; they are chosen and called to eternal life, not on the ground of any thing in them, but according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. God, therefore, is the Alpha and the Omega of salvation. The creature has neither merit nor power. His hopes must rest on sovereign mercy alone.

(36) *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.* The reason why man can lay God under no obligation, is that God is himself all and in all; the source, the means, and the end. By him all things are; through his power, wisdom, and goodness all things are directed and governed; and to him, as their last end, all things tend. For the display of his character, every thing exists and is directed, as the highest and noblest of all possible objects. Creatures are as nothing, less than vanity, and nothing, in comparison with God. Human knowledge, power, and virtue are mere glimmering reflections from the brightness of the divine glory. That system of religion, therefore, is best in accordance with the character of God, the nature of man, and the end of the universe, in which all things are of, through, and to God; and which most effectually leads men to say, NOT UNTO US, BUT UNTO THY NAME BE ALL THE GLORY!

DOCTRINES.

1. There is to be a general conversion of the Jews, concerning which the apostle teaches us, 1. That it is to be in some way consequent on the conversion of the Gentiles, vs. 11, 31. 2. That it will be attended

with the most important and desirable results for the rest of the world, vs. 12, 15. 3. That it is to take place after the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in; that is, after the conversion of multitudes of the Gentiles, (how many, who can tell?) v. 25. Nothing is said of this restoration being sudden, or effected by miracle, or consequent on the second advent, or as attended by a restoration of the Jews to their own land. These particulars have all been added by some commentators, either from their own imagination, or from their views of other portions of the Scriptures. On the contrary, it is *through the mercy shown to the Gentiles*, according to Paul, that the Jews are to be brought in, which clearly implies that the former are to be instrumental in the restoration of the latter. And he everywhere teaches that, after their restoration to the church, the distinction between Jew and Gentile ceases. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, Col. 3: 11; all classes are merged in one, as was the case under the direction of the apostles in the first ages of the church.

2. The church of God is the same in all ages, and under all dispensations. It is the society of the true people of God, together with their children. To this society the ancient patriarchs and their posterity belonged; into this society, at the time of Christ, other nations were admitted, and the great body of the Jews were cast out, and into this same community the ancient people of God are to be again received. In every stage of its progress the church is the same. The olive tree is one, though the branches are numerous, and sometimes changed, vs. 17—24.

3. The web of Providence is wonderfully woven. Good and evil are made with equal certainty, under the government of infinite wisdom and benevolence, to result in the promotion of God's gracious and glorious designs. The wicked unbelief and consequent rejection of the Jews are made the means of facilitating the conversion of the Gentiles; the holy faith and obedience of the Gentiles are to be the means of the restoration of the Jews, vs. 11, 31.

4. All organized communities, civil and ecclesiastical, have a common responsibility, a moral personality, in the sight of God, and are dealt with accordingly, rewarded or punished according to their conduct, as such. As their organized existence is confined to this world, so must the retributive dispensations of God respecting them be. Witness the rejection, dispersion, and sufferings of the Jews, as a national punishment for their national rejection of the Messiah. Witness the state of all the eastern churches broken off from the olive tree for the unbelief of former generations. Their fathers sinned, and their children's children, to the third and fourth generation, suffer the penalty, as they share in the guilt, vs. 11—24.

5. The security of every individual Christian is suspended on his continuing in faith and holy obedience; which is indeed rendered certain by the purpose and promise of God. In like manner the security of every

civil and ecclesiastical society, in the enjoyment of its peculiar advantages, is suspended on its fidelity as such, for which fidelity there is no special promise with regard to any country, or any church, vs. 20—24.

6. God does sometimes enter into covenant with communities, as such. Thus he has covenanted to the whole human race that the world shall not be again destroyed by a deluge, and that the seasons shall continue to succeed each other, in regular order, until the end of time. Thus he covenanted with the Jews to be a God to them, and to their seed, for ever, and that they should be to him a people. This, it seems, is a perpetual covenant, which continues in force until the present day, and which renders certain the restoration of the Jews to the privileges of the church of God, vs. 16, 28, 29.

7. It is the radical principle of the Bible, and consequently of all true religion, that God is all and in all; that of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. It is the tendency of all truth to exalt God, and to humble the creature; and it is characteristic of true piety to feel that all good comes from God, and to desire that all glory should be given to God, vs. 33—36.

REMARKS.

1. The mutual relation between the Christian church and the Jews should produce in the minds of all the followers of Christ, 1. An abiding sense of our obligations to the Jews as the people through whom the true religion has been preserved, and the blessings of divine truth extended to all nations, vs. 17, 18. 2. Sincere compassion for them, because their rejection and misery have been the means of reconciling the world to God, i. e. of extending the gospel of reconciliation among men, vs. 11, 12, 15. 3. The banishment of all feelings of contempt towards them, or exultation over them, vs. 18, 20. 4. An earnest desire, prompting to prayer and effort, for their restoration, as an event fraught with blessings to them and to all the world, and which God has determined to bring to pass, vs. 12, 15, 25, &c.

2. The dealings of God with his ancient people should, moreover, teach us, 1. That we have no security for the continuance of our privileges but constant fidelity, v. 20. 2. That, consequently, instead of being proud and self-confident, we should be humble and cautious, vs. 20, 21. 3. That God will probably not bear with us as long as he bore with the Jews, v. 21. 4. That if for our unbelief we are cast out of the church, our punishment will probably be more severe. There is no special covenant securing the restoration of any apostate branch of the Christian church, vs. 21, 24, with 16, 27—29.

3. It is a great blessing to be connected with those who are in covenant with God. The promise is "to thee and thy seed after thee." "The Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations," Deut. 7: 9. The blessing of Abraham reaches, as

some of its precious consequences, to the Jews of this and every coming age, vs. 16, 27—29.

4. The destiny of our children and our children's children is suspended, in a great measure, on our fidelity. "God is a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him." What words of wo for unborn thousands, were those, "His blood be on us and on our children!" As the Jews of the present age are suffering the consequences of the unbelief of their fathers, and the nominal Christians of the eastern churches suffer for the apostasy of previous generations, so will our children perish, if we, for our unbelief as a church and nation, are cast off from God, vs. 19—24.

5. As the restoration of the Jews is not only a most desirable event, but one which God has determined to accomplish, Christians should keep it constantly in view even in their labours for the conversion of the Gentiles. This Paul did, vs. 13, 14. Every effort to hasten the accession of the fulness of the Gentiles is so much done towards the restoration of Israel, v. 25.

6. Christians should not feel as though they were isolated beings, as if each one need be concerned for himself alone, having no joint responsibility with the community to which he belongs. God will deal with our church and country as a whole, and visit our sins upon those who are to come after us. We should feel, therefore, that we are one body, members one of another, having common interests and responsibilities. We ought to weep over the sins of the community to which we belong, as being in one sense, and in many of their consequences, our sins, vs. 11—24.

7. As the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, those to whom he has given the Holy Spirit, and has called unto holiness, may rejoice in the certainty of the continuance of these blessings, v. 29.

8. Does the contemplation of the work of redemption, and the remembrance of our own experience, lead us to sympathize with the apostle in his adoring admiration of the wisdom and goodness of God, and to feel that, as it regards our salvation, every thing is of him, through him, and to him? vs. 33—36.

9. As it is the tendency and result of all correct views of Christian doctrine to produce the feelings expressed by the apostle at the close of this chapter, those views cannot be scriptural which have a contrary tendency; or which lead us to ascribe, in any form, our salvation to our own merit or power, vs. 33—33.

CHAPTER XII

CONTENTS.

THIS chapter consists of two parts. The first, vs. 1—8, treats of piety towards God, and the proper estimation and use of the various gifts and offices employed or exercised in the church. The second, vs. 9—21, relates to love and its various manifestations towards different classes of men.

CHAP. 12: 1—8.

[1]I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. [2]And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. [3]For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. [4]For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: [5]so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. [6]Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; [7]or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; [8]or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

ANALYSIS.

As the apostle had concluded the doctrinal portion of the epistle with the preceding chapter, agreeably to his almost uniform practice, he deduces from his doctrines important practical lessons. The first deduction from the exhibition which he had made of the mercy of God in the redemption of men, is, that they should devote themselves to him as a living sacrifice, and be conformed to his will, and not to the manners of the world, vs. 1, 2. The second is, that they should be humble, and not allow the diversity of their gifts to destroy the sense of their unity as one body in Christ, vs. 3—5. These various gifts were to be exercised, not for selfish purposes, but in a manner consistent with their nature and design; diligently, disinterestedly, and kindly, vs. 6—8.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God*, &c. As the sum of all that Paul had said of the justification, sanctification,

and salvation of men is, that these results are to be attributed, not to human merit nor to human efforts, but to the mercy of God, he brings the whole discussion to bear as a motive for devotion to God. Whatever gratitude the soul feels for pardon, purity, and the sure prospect of eternal life, is called forth to secure its consecration to that God who is the author of all these mercies.

That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. All the expressions of this clause seem to have an obvious reference to the services of the Old Testament economy. Under that dispensation, animals free from blemish were presented and devoted to God; under the new dispensation a nobler and more spiritual service is to be rendered; not the oblation of animals, but the consecration of ourselves. The expression *your bodies* is perhaps nearly equivalent to *yourselves;* yet Paul probably used it with design, not only because it is appropriate to the figure, but because he wished to render the idea prominent that the whole man, body as well as soul, is to be devoted to the service of God. "Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirits which are God's," 1 Cor. 6: 20. The apostle carries the figure out; the sacrifice is to be *living*, *holy*, and *acceptable*. The first of these epithets is generally considered as intended to express the contrast between the sacrifice here intended, and the victims which were placed lifeless upon the altar; thus believers, in 1 Pet. 2: 5, are called "living stones" in opposition to the senseless materials employed in a literal building. The word *living*, however, may mean *perpetual*, *lasting*, *never neglected;* as in the phrases "living bread," John 6: 51, 'bread which never loses its power;' "living hope," 1 Pet. 1: 3, 'hope which never fails;' "living waters," "a living way," &c. The sacrifice then which we are to make is not a transient service like the oblation of a victim which was in a few moments consumed upon the altar, but it is a living or perpetual sacrifice never to be neglected or recalled. The epithet *holy* has probably direct reference to the frequent use of a nearly corresponding word in the Hebrew scriptures, which, when applied to sacrifices, is commonly rendered *without blemish*. The word *holy* is then in this case equivalent to *immaculate*, i. e. free from those defects which would cause an offering to be rejected. The term *acceptable* is here used in the same sense as the phrase "for a sweet smelling savour," Eph. 5: 2. Phil. 4: 18. Lev. 1: 9, i. e. *grateful*, *well-pleasing;* a sacrifice in which God delights.

Your reasonable service. There is doubt as to the grammatical construction of this clause. The most natural and simple explanation is to consider it in apposition with the preceding member of the sentence, as has been done by our translators, who supply the words *which is*. This consecration of ourselves to God, which the apostle requires, is a *reasonable service*. The word rendered *reasonable* is variously explained. The simplest interpretation is that which takes the word in its natural sense, viz. *pertaining to the mind;* it is a mental or spiritual service in opposi-

tion to ceremonial and external observances. Compare the phrase 'milk suited, or pertaining to the mind,' 1 Pet. 2: 2. Others understand these words as expressing the difference between the sacrifices under the Christian dispensation and those under the Old. Formerly animals destitute of reason were offered unto God, but now men possessed of a rational soul. But this interpretation is neither so well suited to the meaning of the word, nor does it give a sense so consistent with the context.

(2) *And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*, &c. Not only is God to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, as required in the preceding verse, but there must be a corresponding holiness of life. This idea is expressed in the manner most common with the sacred writers. Regarding men universally as corrupted and devoted to sin, *the world* is with them equivalent to *the wicked;* to be conformed to the world, therefore, is to be like unrenewed men in temper and in life. The word accurately rendered *conformed* expresses strongly the idea of similarity in character and manners; and that rendered *transformed* expresses with equal strength the opposite idea. *This world.* The origin of this term, as used in the New Testament, is no doubt to be sought in the mode of expression so common among the Jews, who were accustomed to distinguish between the times before, and the times under the Messiah, by calling the former period *this world*, or *this age*, and the latter, *the world*, or *age to come.* The former phrase thus naturally came to designate those who were without, and the latter those who were within the kingdom of Christ; they are equivalent to the expressions *the world* and *the church;* the mass of mankind and the people of God; com. 1 Cor. 2: 8. Eph. 2: 2. 2 Cor. 4: 4.

By the renewing of your mind. This phrase is intended to be explanatory of the preceding. The transformation to which Christians are exhorted, is not a mere external change, but one which results from a change of heart, an entire alteration of the state of the mind. The word rendered *mind* is used, as it is here, frequently in the New Testament, Rom. 1: 28. Eph. 4: 17, 23. Col. 2: 18, &c., in all these and in similar cases it does not differ from the word *heart.*

That ye may be able to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. The logical relation of this clause to the preceding is doubtful, as the original admits of its being regarded as expressing either the design or the result of the change just spoken of. Our translators have adopted the former view, 'Ye are renewed, in order that ye may be able to prove, &c.' The other, however, gives an equally good sense, 'Ye are renewed so that ye prove,' &c.; such is the effect of the change in question. The word rendered *to prove* signifies also *to approve;* the sense of this passage, therefore, may be either 'that ye may try or prove what is acceptable to God,' i. e. decide upon or ascertain what is right; or, 'that ye may approve what is good,' &c. The words *good, acceptable*, and *perfect*, are by many considered as predicates

of the word *will*. As, however, the expression 'acceptable will of God' is unnatural and unusual, the majority of modern commentators take them as substantives; 'that ye may approve what is good, acceptable and perfect, viz. the will of God.' The last phrase is then in apposition with the others. The design and result then of that great change of which Paul speaks is, that Christians should know, delight in, and practise whatever is good and acceptable to God; compare Eph. 5: 10, 17. Phil. 4: 8.

(3) *For I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think*, &c. The apostle connects with the general exhortation contained in the preceding verses, and founds upon it, an exhortation to special Christian virtues. The first virtue which he enjoins upon believers is modesty or humility. This has reference specially to the officers of the church, or at least to the recipients of spiritual gifts. It is very evident from 1 Cor. 12 and 14, that these gifts were coveted and exercised by many of the early Christians for the purpose of self-exaltation. They, therefore, desired not those which were most useful, but those which were most attractive; and some were puffed up, while others were envious and discontented. This evil the apostle forcibly and beautifully reproved in the chapters referred to, in the same manner that he does here, and much more at length.

Through the grace given unto me. The word *grace* in this clause is by many understood to mean the apostolic office, which Paul elsewhere speaks of as a great favour; com. ch. 1: 5. 15: 15. Eph. 3: 2, 8. But this interpretation appears here too limited; the word probably includes all the *favour* of God towards him, not merely in conferring on him the office of an apostle, but in bestowing all the gifts of the Spirit, ordinary and extraordinary, which qualified him for his duties, and gave authority to his instructions.

Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. The word *to think* is an inadequate translation of the Greek, inasmuch as the latter includes the idea of the exercise of the affections as well as of the intellect; see ch. 8: 5. Col. 3: 2. Phil. 3: 19. *To think of oneself too highly* is to be puffed up with an idea of our own importance and superiority.

But to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. The word rendered *soberly* properly means *to be of a sane mind;* and then *to be moderate*, or *temperate*. Paul speaks of one who overestimates or praises himself as being beside himself; and of him who is modest and humble as being of a sane mind, i. e. as making a proper estimate of himself. "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause," 2 Cor. 5: 13, i. e. 'If we commend ourselves, it is that God may be honoured; and if we act modestly and abstain from self-commendation, it is that you may be benefited.' *To think soberly*, therefore, is to form and manifest a

right estimate of ourselves, and of our gifts. A right estimate can never be other than a very humble one, since, whatever there is of good in us is not of ourselves, but of God.

The expression *measure* or *proportion of faith* is variously explained. Faith may be taken in its usual sense, and the meaning of the clause be, 'Let every one think of himself according to the degree of faith or confidence in God which has been imparted to him, and not as though he had more than he really possesses.' Or *faith* may be taken for what is believed, or for knowledge of divine truth, and the sense be, 'according to the degree of knowledge which he has attained.' Or it may be taken for *that which is confided* to any, and be equivalent to *gift*. The sense then is, 'Let every one think of himself according to the nature or character of the gifts which he has received.' This is perhaps the most generally received interpretation, though the first is certainly more natural: either, however, gives a good sense.

(4, 5) *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we*, &c. In these verses we have the same comparison that occurs more at length in 1 Cor. 12, and for the same purpose. The object of the apostle is in both cases the same. He designs to show that the diversity of offices and gifts among Christians, so far from being inconsistent with their union as one body in Christ, is necessary to the perfection and usefulness of that body. It would be as unreasonable for all Christians to have the same gifts, as for all the members of the human frame to have the same office. This comparison is peculiarly beautiful and appropriate; because it not only clearly illustrates the particular point intended, but at the same time brings into view the important truth that the real union of Christians results from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as the union of the several members of the body is the result of their being all animated and actuated by one soul. Nothing can present in a clearer light the duty of Christian fellowship, or the sinfulness of divisions and envyings among the members of Christ's body than the apostle's comparison. 'Believers, though many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.'

(6) *Having, therefore, gifts differing according to the grace given unto us*, &c. In this and the following verses we have the application of the preceding comparison to the special object in view. 'If Christians are all members of the same body, having different offices and gifts, instead of being puffed up one above another, and instead of envying and opposing each other, they should severally discharge their respective duties, diligently and humbly, for the good of the whole, and not for their own advantage.' There is no appearance of systematic arrangement in this passage; on the contrary, Paul seems to refer without any order to the various duties which the officers and even private members of the church were called upon to perform. The construction in the original is not entirely regular, and, therefore, has been variously explained. There is no interpretation more natural than that adopted by

our translators, who, considering the passage as elliptical, have supplied in the several specifications the phrases which in each case the sense requires.

Having, therefore, gifts differing according to the grace given unto us, i. e. as there are in the one body various offices and gifts, let every one act in a manner consistent with the nature and design of the particular gift which he has received. *Whether prophecy*, let us prophesy *according to the proportion of faith*. The first gift specified is that of *prophecy*, with regard to the precise nature of which there is no little diversity of opinion. The original and proper meaning of the Hebrew word rendered *prophet* in the Old Testament is *interpreter*, one who explains or delivers the will of another. And to this idea the Greek term also answers. It matters little whether the will or purpose of God which the prophets were called upon to deliver, had reference to present duty or to future events. They derived their Hebrew name, not from predicting what was to come to pass, which was but a small part of their duty, but from being the interpreters of God, men who spoke in his name. We accordingly find the term *prophet* applied to all classes of religious teachers under the old dispensation. See Gen. 20: 7. Deut. 18: 18; and particularly Ex. 7: 1, "And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god unto Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet," i. e. thy interpreter. In ch. 4: 16, it is said, "He shall be a mouth to thee," which expresses the same idea. And this is also the sense of the word in the New Testament; it is applied to any one employed to deliver a divine message, Matt. 10: 41. 13: 57. Luke 4: 24. 7: 26—29. John 4: 19. Acts 15: 32. 1 Cor. 12: 28. 14: 29—32. From these and numerous similar passages it appears that the prophets in the Christian church were men who spoke under the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, and delivered some divine communication relating to doctrinal truths, to present duty, to future events, &c., as the case might be. The point of distinction between them and the apostles, considered as religious teachers, appears to have been, that the inspiration of the apostles was abiding, they were the infallible and authoritative messengers of Christ; whereas the inspiration of the prophets was occasional and transient. The latter differed from the teachers, inasmuch as these were not necessarily inspired, but taught to others what they themselves had learned from the Scriptures, or from inspired men.

The gift of which Paul here speaks is not, therefore, the faculty of predicting future events, but that of immediate occasional inspiration, leading the recipient to deliver, as the mouth of God, the particular communication which he had received, whether designed for instruction, exhortation, or comfort. The apostle required that those who enjoyed this gift should exercise it *according to the proportion of faith*. This clause admits of different interpretations. The word rendered *proportion* may mean either *proportion* or *measure*, *rule*, *standard*. Classic usage is rather in favour of the former of these meanings, &c. The latter,

however, is necessarily included in the former; and the word is defined by Hesychius, *measure*, *canon*, or *rule*. The choice between the two meanings of the word must depend on the sense given to the word *faith*, and on the context. *Faith* may here mean inward confidence or belief; or it may mean the gift received, i. e. *that which is confided*; or, finally, that which is believed, i. e. truths divinely revealed. If *faith* here means, as it does in so many other places, the *object of faith*, or *the truths to be believed* (see Gal. 1: 23. 3: 23, 25. 6: 10. Eph. 4: 5. 1 Thess. 3: 5, &c. &c.), then *according to the analogy* signifies *agreeably to the rule* or *standard*, and the apostle's direction to the prophets is, that in all their communications they are to conform to the rule of faith, and not contradict those doctrines which had been delivered by men whose inspiration had been established by indubitable evidence. In favour of this view of the passage is the frequent use of the word *faith* in the sense thus assigned to it. 2. The fact that similar directions respecting those who consider themselves prophets, or inspired persons, occur in other passages. 1 Cor. 14: 37. 1 John 4: 1, 6. 3. This interpretation is also perfectly suitable to the context. Paul, after giving the general direction contained in the preceding verses, as to the light in which the gifts of the Spirit were to be viewed, and the manner in which they were to be used, in this and the following verses, gives special directions with respect to particular gifts. Those who thought themselves prophets should be careful to speak nothing but truth, to conform to the standard; those who ministered should devote themselves to their appropriate duties, &c. If the first sense of the word *faith* mentioned above be adopted, then the meaning of the passage is, 'Let him prophesy according to his internal convictions; that is, he must not exceed in his communications what he honestly believes to have been divinely communicated, or allow himself to be carried away by enthusiasm to deliver, as from God, what is really nothing but his own thoughts.'

(7) *Or ministry*, let us wait *on* our *ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching.* The terms *minister* and *ministry* (*deacon* and *deaconship*) are used in the New Testament both in a general and a restricted sense. In the former they are employed in reference to all classes of ecclesiastical officers, even the apostles; see 1 Cor. 3: 5. 2 Cor. 6: 4. Eph. 3: 7. 6: 21. Col. 1: 7, 23. 1 Tim. 4: 6. See also Acts 1: 17, 25. 20: 24. Rom. 11: 13. 1 Cor. 12: 5. 2 Cor. 4: 1, &c. &c. In the latter they are used in reference to a particular class of officers, to whom were committed the management of the external affairs of the church, the care of the poor, attention to the sick, &c.; see Acts 6: 1—3. Phil. 1: 1. 1 Tim. 3: 8—13, &c. It is doubtful in which of these senses the latter of the above mentioned words is here used by the apostle; most probably in the restricted sense. The apostle exhorts different classes of officers to attend to their own peculiar vocation, and to exercise their own gifts, without intruding into the sphere of others, or envying their superior

endowments. The deacons, therefore, were to attend to the poor and the sick, and not attempt to exercise the office of teachers.

He that teacheth, on teaching. Teachers are elsewhere expressly distinguished from *prophets*, 1 Cor. 12: 28, 29, "God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?" And in this passage they are not to be confounded, nor is teaching to be regarded, in this place, as one part of prophesying. Those who had the gift of prophecy were to exercise it aright; those who were called to the office of deacons were to devote themselves to their appropriate duties; and those who had the gift of teaching were to teach.

(8) *He that exhorteth, on exhortation.* The word here used means *to invite, exhort*, and *to comfort*. Our translators have probably selected the most appropriate sense. There was probably no distinct class of officers called exhorters, as distinguished from teachers; but as the apostle is speaking of gifts as well as offices, his direction is, that he who had the gift of teaching should teach, and that he who had a gift for exhortation should be content to exhort.

He that giveth, let him do it *with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.* These directions have reference to the manner in which the duties of church officers and of private Christians ought to be performed. In this connexion, the former no doubt are principally, though not exclusively, intended. *He that giveth, with simplicity.* This direction, considered in reference to the deacons, whom, no doubt, Paul had principally in view, contemplates their duty of *imparting* or *distributing* to the necessity of the saints. This duty they are required to perform with *simplicity*, i. e. with purity of motive, free from all improper designs. This same word is rendered *singleness of heart* in Eph. 6: 5. Col. 3: 22, and occurs, in the same sense, in the phrase "simplicity and godly sincerity," 2 Cor. 1: 12. Considered in reference to private Christians, this clause may be rendered *he that giveth, with liberality*; see 2 Cor. 8: 2. 9: 11, 13.

He that ruleth, with diligence. Here again the right discharge of ecclesiastical duties is principally intended; 1 Thess. 5: 12, "We beseech you, brethren, to know (esteem, love) them that are over you in the Lord;" 1 Tim. 5: 17, "The elders that rule well." Some of the presbyters were teachers and others rulers, according to their gifts. Those who were called to exercise the office of ruler were required to do it with *diligence*, i. e. with attention and zeal. This is opposed to inertness and carelessness. The government of the church, in correcting abuses, preventing disorders, and in the administration of discipline, calls for constant vigilance and fidelity.

He that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. As the former direction (he that giveth, with simplicity) had reference to the care of the poor, this relates to the care of the sick and afflicted. These were the two great departments of the deacon's duties. The former was to be dis-

charged with honesty, this with cheerfulness; not as a matter of constraint, but with alacrity and kindness. On this the value of any service rendered to the children of sorrow mainly depends.

DOCTRINES.

1. The great principle that truth is in order to holiness, which is so frequently taught in the Scriptures, is plainly implied in this passage. All the doctrines of justification, grace, election, and final salvation, taught in the preceding part of the epistle, are made the foundation for the practical duties enjoined in this, v. 1.

2. The first great duty of redeemed sinners is the dedication of themselves to God. This consecration must be entire, of the body as well as the soul; it must be constant and according to his will, v. 1.

3. Regeneration is a renewing of the mind, evincing itself in a transformation of the whole character, and leading to the knowledge and approbation of whatever is acceptable to God, v. 2.

4. God is the giver of all good, of honours and offices as well as of talents and graces; and in the distribution of his favours he renders to every man according to his own will, vs. 3, 6.

5. Christians are one body in Christ. This unity is not only consistent with great diversity of gifts, but necessarily implies it; as the body is one from the union of various members designed for the performance of various functions, vs. 4, 5.

6. The different offices of the church are of divine appointment, and are designed for the benefit of the whole body, and not for the advantage of those who hold them, vs. 6—8.

REMARKS.

1. The effect produced upon us by the mercies of God, in redemption, and in his providence, affords an excellent criterion of character. If they lead us to devote ourselves to his service, they produce the result for which they were designed, and we may conclude that we are of the number of his children. But if they produce indifference to duty, and cherish the idea that we are the special favourites of heaven, or that we may sin with impunity, it is an evidence that our hearts are not right in the sight of God, v. 1.

2. While Christians should remember that the service which they are called upon to render is a rational service, pertaining to the soul, they should not suppose that it consists merely in the secret exercises of the heart. The whole man and the whole life must be actively and constantly devoted to God, v. 1.

3. Those professors of religion who are conformed to the world cannot have experienced that renewing of the mind, which produces a transformation of character, v. 2.

4. Self-conceit and ambition are the besetting sins of men intrusted with power, or highly gifted in any respect, as discontent and envy are

those to which persons of inferior station or gifts are most exposed. These evil feelings, so offensive to God, would be subdued if men would properly lay to heart that peculiar advantages are bestowed according to the divine pleasure; that they are designed to advance the glory of God, and good of his church, and not the honour or emolument of those that receive them; and that very frequently those which are least attractive in the sight of men, are the most important in the sight of God. It is here as in the human frame; not the most comely parts are the most valuable but those which are the least so. The vital parts of our system never attract the praise of men, and are never the source of vanity or pride, v. 3.

5. As Christians are one body in Christ, they should feel their mutual dependence and their common interest in their head, from whom life, intelligence, enjoyment, and every good comes. They should sympathize in each other's joys and sorrows; the hand should not envy the eye, nor the eye despise the foot. How can they, who are destitute of this common feeling with their fellow Christians, be partakers of that Spirit by which true believers are constituted really and not merely nominally one? vs. 4, 5.

6. Real honour consists in doing well what God calls us to do, and not in the possession of high offices or great talents, vs. 6—8.

7. No man's usefulness is increased by going out of his sphere. It is a great mistake to suppose because one profession or employment may, in itself considered, afford better opportunity of doing good than another, that, therefore, any or every man would be more useful in the one than in the other. The highest improvement of the individual, and the greatest good of the whole, are best secured by each being and doing what God sees fit to determine. If all were the same member, where were the body? 'God is not the author of confusion, but of order, in all the churches of the saints,' vs. 6—8.

8. No amount of learning, no superiority of talent, nor even the pretension to inspiration, can justify a departure from the analogy of faith, i. e. from the truths taught by men to whose inspiration God has borne witness. All teachers must be brought to this standard; and even if an angel from heaven should preach in contradiction to the Scriptures, he should be regarded as anathema, Gal. 1: 8. It is a matter of constant gratitude that we have such a standard whereby to try the spirits whether they be of God. Ministers of Christ should see to it, that they do not incur the curse which Paul denounces on those who preach another gospel, v. 6.

9. Private Christians, but especially ecclesiastical officers, are required to discharge their respective duties with singleness of heart, and in the exercise of those virtues which the peculiar nature of their vocation may demand, vs. 6—8.

CHAP. 12: 9—21.

9*Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil: cleave to that which is good. 10*Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11not slothful in business fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 14Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not. 15Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16*Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

ANALYSIS.

Having treated of those duties which belong more especially to the officers of the church, the apostle exhorts his readers generally to the exercise of various Christian virtues. There is no logical arrangement observed in this part of the chapter, except that the general exhortation to love precedes the precepts which relate to those exercises which are, for the most part, but different manifestations of this primary grace. The love of the Christian must be sincere, and lead to the avoiding of evil and the pursuit of good, v. 9. It must produce brotherly affection and humility, or kindness, v. 10; diligence and devotion, v. 11; resignation, patience, and prayer, v. 12; charity and hospitality, v. 13; forgiveness of injuries, v. 14; sympathy with the joys and sorrows of others, v. 15; concord and lowliness of mind, v. 16; and a constant endeavour to return good for evil, vs. 17—21.

COMMENTARY.

(9) *Let love be without dissimulation*, i. e. sincere, not hypocritical, and not consisting in words merely. The love here intended is probably love to all men, and not to Christians exclusively, as in v. 10 *brotherly affection* is particularly specified. Much less is love to God the idea meant to be expressed.

Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. The words rendered *to abhor* and *to cleave to* are peculiarly forcible, and express the highest degree of hatred on the one hand, and of persevering devotion on the other. The latter word, in the active form, properly means *to glue*,

and, in the middle, *to attach one's self to any person or thing.* The words *evil* and *good*, in this passage, may be understood of moral good and evil; and the exhortation be considered as a general direction to hate the one and love the other. But the great majority of commentators, out of regard to the context, take the terms in a restricted sense, making the former mean *injurious*, and the latter *kind.* The sense of the whole verse would then be, 'Let love be sincere; strive to avoid what is injurious to others, and earnestly endeavour to do whatever is kind and useful.' As the words themselves admit of either of these interpretations, the choice between them depends upon the context. The latter is, on this ground, perhaps, to be preferred.

(10) *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.* 'As to brotherly love, be kindly affectioned one towards another.' This exhortation seems to have special reference to Christians. The word used by the apostle expresses properly the strong natural affection between parents and children, but is applied also to tender affection of any kind. Here, no doubt, the idea is, that Christians should love each other with the same sincerity and tenderness as if they were the nearest relatives.

In honour preferring one another. This passage, thus translated, cannot be understood otherwise than as an exhortation to humility; and such is the interpretation generally given to it. But the word rendered *to prefer* never occurs in this sense elsewhere. It means properly *to go before, to lead*, and then, figuratively, *to set an example.* And the word translated *honour* may mean *deference, respect*, and even *kindness.* The sense of the clause may then be, 'as to respect and kindness, going before each other, or setting an example one to another.' This interpretation, which is given by most of the recent commentators, is not only better suited to the meaning of the words, but also to the context. The idea is, that Christians should not only love one another, but endeavour to excel each other in all acts of mutual respect and kindness.

(11) *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.* The love to which the apostle exhorts his readers is not inactive or cold; on the contrary, it manifests itself in diligence, zeal, and devotion to God. The word rendered *business* properly means *haste, zeal, activity.* The exhortation has not the reference which our version would naturally suggest, viz. to the active performance of our several vocations; it refers rather to religious activity. 'As to activity or diligence (i. e. what relates to this point), do not grow weary, or be indolent; on the contrary, be fervent in spirit.' The word *spirit* is by many understood of the Holy Spirit; it most naturally refers to the mind; compare Acts 18: 25, where it is said of Apollos, "being fervent in spirit (i. e. zealous), he spake and taught diligently." This clause, therefore, stands in opposition to the preceding. Instead of being inactive, we should be zealous.

Serving the Lord, i. e. doing service to the Lord, influenced in our activity and zeal by a desire to serve Christ. This member of the sen

tence, thus understood, describes the motive from which zeal and diligence should proceed. Compare Eph. 6: 5—8, especially the expressions *as unto Christ, as the servants of Christ, as to the Lord*, &c.; and Col. 3: 22, 23.

(12) *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.* These exhortations refer to nearly related duties; Christians are to be joyful, patient, and prayerful. However adverse their circumstances, hope, patience, and prayer are not only duties, but the richest sources of consolation and support. 'Rejoicing *on account* of hope, or in the joyful expectation of future good.' This hope of salvation is the most effectual means of producing patience under present afflictions; for if we feel "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," it will not be difficult to bear them patiently. Intercourse with God, however, is necessary to the exercise of this and all other virtues, and therefore the apostle immediately adds *continuing instant in prayer.* The original could hardly be better translated; as the Greek term expresses the idea of perseverance and ardour in the prosecution of any object. There are no attributes of acceptable prayer more frequently presented in the Scriptures than those here referred to, viz. perseverance and fervour, which, from their nature, imply faith in the ability and willingness of God to grant us needed good, Acts 1: 14. 6: 4. Eph. 6: 18, &c. &c.

(13) *Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.* These virtues are the immediate fruits of the love enjoined in vs. 9, 10. The word rendered to distribute signifies, intransitively, *to become a partaker with;* and, transitively, *to cause others to partake with us, to communicate to.* It is commonly followed by a dative of the person to whom the communication is made, Gal. 6: 6. In this case the construction may be the same as in the preceding verses, '*as to the necessity* of the saints, be communicative;' or '*give* to the necessity of the saints, sharing with them, i. e. communicating to them.' As intimately connected with this injunction, the apostle adds *given to hospitality*, as our translators aptly render the strong expression of the original. The value which the early Christians placed upon the virtue of hospitality is plain from Paul's enumerating it among the requisite qualifications of a bishop, Tit. 1: 8. During times of persecution, and before the general institution of houses of entertainment, there was peculiar necessity for Christians to entertain strangers. As such houses are still rarely to be met with in the east, this duty continues to be there regarded as one of the most sacred character.

(14) *Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not.* The exercise of love, and the discharge of the duties of benevolence, are not to be confined to the *saints* or people of God, but the same spirit is to be manifested towards our enemies. The word rendered *to bless* signifies both *to pray for good to any one*, and *to do good;* here, from the context, the former meaning is to be preferred, as it is opposed *to cursing*,

which signifies *to imprecate evil on any one.* The command, therefore, is that, so far from wishing or praying that evil may overtake our persecutors and enemies, we must sincerely desire and pray for their good.

(15) *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.* Love produces not only the forgiveness of enemies, but a general sympathy in the joys and sorrows of our fellow men, and especially of our fellow Christians. The disposition here enjoined is the very opposite of a selfish indifference to any interests but our own. The gospel requires that we should feel and act under the impression that all men are brethren, that we have a common nature, a common Father, and a common destiny. How lovely is genuine sympathy! How much like Christ is the man who feels the sorrows and joys of others, as though they were his own!

(16) *Be of the same mind one towards another ; mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.* The phrase used by the apostle expresses the general idea of *concord, unanimity ;* whether of opinion or feeling depends on the context; see 2 Cor. 13 : 11. Phil. 2 : 2. Rom. 15 : 5. Here the latter idea is the prominent one. 'Be of the same mind, i. e. be united in feeling, interests, and object; let there be no discord or disagreement.' This idea is then amplified in the following clauses; do not be aspiring, but be humble. Ambition, and contempt for lowly persons or pursuits, are the states of mind most inconsistent with that union of heart by which all Christians should be united.

Mind not high things, i. e. do not aspire after them, do not desire and seek them ; see the use of the Greek word here employed in ch. 8 : 5. Col. 3 : 2. *But condescend to men of low estate.* The general idea expressed by these two clauses is obviously this, 'Be not high-minded, but humble.' The precise meaning of the latter, however, is a matter of much doubt. The word rendered *condescend* properly means, in the passive or middle voice, *to allow one's self to be carried along with others,* influenced by them, as in Gal. 2 : 13, "Insomuch that Barnabas also was (allowed himself to be) carried away with their dissimulation." And 2 Pet. 3 : 17, "Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." Many retain this sense of the word here, and consider the exhortation to be, 'not to withdraw themselves from their unfortunate brethren, but to allow themselves to be carried along with them before the judgment seat, or into their various trials.' But this seems to be pressing the meaning of the word, in this case, too far, as this interpretation is not suitable to the context. Others, therefore, understand the word in an unusual sense, it is true, but still in one nearly allied to the other meaning, viz. *to associate with :* 'Do not be aspiring, but associate with the lowly.' This gives a perfectly good sense, and one consistent with the context. The Greek commentators and our translators express much the same idea, 'Do not be high-minded, but condescend to the lowly,' i. e. sympathize with them, put yourselves on a par with

them.' The words rendered *to men of low estate* admit of being taken as neuter, and translated *lowly things.* This would well suit the former part of the sentence, 'Mind not high things, but condescend to humble affairs, i. e. be humble.' But this interpretation is not consistent with the usage of the Greek terms. The interpretation adopted by our translators is therefore, on the whole, to be preferred. 'Do not aspire after high things, but condescend to, and associate with, the humble.'

Be not wise in your own conceit. This precept is intimately connected with the preceding, since ambition and contempt of others generally arise from overweening ideas of our own persons and attainments. No species of pride is more insidious or more injurious than the pride of intellect, or a fancied superiority to those around us, which leads to a contempt of their opinions, and a confident reliance upon ourselves. The temper which the gospel requires is that of a little child, docile, diffident, and humble; see ch. 11: 25. Prov. 3: 7.

(17) *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.* Paul having, in the preceding verses, enjoined the duties of love, condescension and kindness towards all men, comes, in this and the following passages, to forbid the indulgence of a contrary disposition, especially of a spirit of retaliation and revenge. The general direction in the first clause is, not to retaliate; which is but a lower exercise of the virtue afterward enjoined in the command to "overcome evil with good."

Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Our translation of this clause is not very happy, as it suggests an idea foreign to the meaning of the original. Paul does not mean to direct us to make provision for ourselves or families in an honest manner, which is probably the sense commonly attached to the passage by the English reader, but to act in such a manner as to command the confidence and good opinion of men. In this view, the connexion of this with the preceding member of the verse is obvious. 'We must not recompense evil for evil, but act in such a way as to commend ourselves to the conscience of all men.' There should not, therefore, be a period after the word *evil*, since this clause assigns a motive for the discharge of the duty enjoined in the first. The word rendered *to provide*, signifies also *to attend to, to care for.* The sense then is, 'Do not resent injuries, having regard to the good opinion of men,' i. e. let a regard to the honour of religion and your own character prevent the returning of evil for evil; compare 2 Cor. 8: 20, 21.

(18) *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.* The retaliation of injuries necessarily leads to contention and strife, while peace is the natural result of a forgiving disposition. The command in this verse, therefore, is naturally connected with that contained in v. 17. So far from resenting every offence, we should do all we can to live at peace with all men. This, however, is not always in our own power, and, therefore, the apostle says, *as much as lieth in you*, i. e. as far as it depends on you, let peace be cultivated. This Paul con-

siders, however, as a result not always to be attained, for he says, *if it be possible* live peaceably with all men.

(19) *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves; but* rather *give place unto wrath*, &c. This is a repetition and amplification of the previous injunction, not to recompense evil for evil. There are three interpretations of the phrase *give place unto wrath* which deserve to be mentioned. According to the first, the wrath here intended is that of the injured party, and *to give place to* is made to signify, to allow it to pass, i. e. let it go, do not cherish or indulge it. But this is in direct contradiction to the common and proper meaning of the phrase, which signifies *to give free scope to;* and no example of a contrary usage is adduced. The second interpretation refers the *wrath* to the injurer. The meaning then is, 'Do not avenge yourselves, but rather yield or submit to the anger of your enemies.' But this also is inconsistent with the scriptural usage of the expression *to give place to*, which means *to make room for*, *to give free scope to*. The third interpretation, therefore, according to which it is the *wrath of God* that is here intended, is the only one consistent with the meaning of the phrase or with the context. 'Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, leave that matter to God; it is his prerogative to take vengeance, but do you overcome evil with good.' The passage, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord*, is quoted from Deut. 32: 35, and is obviously cited to show the propriety of the command to leave vengeance to God, and not attempt to take it into our own hands.

(20) *Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink*, &c. That is, instead of avenging ourselves by returning evil for evil, we must return good for evil. The expression *feed him* and *give him drink* are obviously not to be confined to their literal meaning, nor even to the discharge of the common offices of humanity; they are figurative expressions for all the duties of benevolence. It is not enough, therefore, that we preserve an enemy from perishing; we must treat him with all affection and kindness.

For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. This whole verse is taken from Prov. 25: 21, 22, "If thine enemy be hungry give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." The common and natural meaning of the expression *to heap coals of fire upon any one*, is to inflict the greatest pain upon him, to punish him most severely; see Ps. 140: 10, "Let burning coals fall upon them;" Ps. 11: 6, "Upon the wicked he shall rain coals, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest;" Ez. 10: 2. 4 Esdr. 16: 52, "Let not the wicked deny that he has sinned, for coals of fire shall burn upon the head of him who denies that he has sinned against the Lord God." The most probable explanation of this figurative expression is, that the allusion is to the lightning or fire from heaven, which is the symbol of the divine vengeance. To rain fire upon any one, is to visit him with the severest and surest destruction. This explanation is much more natural than to

suppose the allusion is to the practice of throwing firebrands upon the heads of the besiegers of a city, or to the fusing of metals. Paul does not mean to say, 'Treat your enemy kindly, for in so doing you will secure his being punished by God in the severest manner.' His meaning is, 'Treat your enemy kindly, for in so doing you take the most effectual method to subdue him.' To heap coals of fire on the head is to inflict the severest punishment, one to which the sufferer must yield. Kindness is no less effectual; the most malignant enemy cannot always withstand it. The true and Christian method, therefore, to subdue an enemy is to "overcome evil with good."

(21) *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* It is only by disconnecting this verse from the preceding, and considering it as nearly independent of it, that any plausibility can be given to the first interpretation mentioned above of v. 20. That it is not thus independent of it almost every reader must feel. 'We are not to conquer evil by evil, but to treat our enemies with kindness. Thus we shall most effectually subdue them. Do not, therefore, allow yourself to be overcome of evil (i. e. to be provoked to the indulgence of a spirit of retaliation), but overcome evil with good, subdue your enemies by kindness, not by injuries.'

DOCTRINES.

1. Love is the fulfilling of the law; it leads to the avoiding of every thing injurious to our neighbour, and to sedulous attention to every thing adapted to promote his welfare, v. 9.

2. The relation in which Christians stand to each other is that of members of the same family. As, however, it is not a relation constituted by birth, nor secured by the adoption of a name, there is no evidence of its existence but that which consists in the exercise of that 'brotherly affection' (that spiritual στοργή) which brethren in Christ feel for each other, v. 10.

3. Religion is the soul of morality, without which it is but a lovely corpse. Our moral duties we must perform as "serving the Lord." The religious affections and emotions do not supersede those of a simply benevolent or social character, but mingle with them, and elevate all social and relative duties into acts of religion and genuine morality, v. 11.

4. The source of our life is in God; without intercourse with him therefore we cannot derive those supplies of grace which are requisite to preserve the spirit of piety in our hearts, and to send a vital influence through the various duties and avocations of life. Hence the absolute necessity of being "instant in prayer," v. 12.

5. God has made of one blood all men that dwell upon the face of the earth. There is in this fact, of a common origin and the possession of a common nature, a sufficient ground for the inculcation of a universal sympathy with all our fellow men. As he is no true Christian who is destitude of a genuine sympathy for his fellow Christians, so he is very

far from being a man such as God approves who does not "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep," v. 15.

6. A wrong estimate of ourselves is a fruitful source of evil. Viewed in relation to God, and in our own absolute insignificance, we have little reason to be wise or important in our own conceits. A proper self-knowledge will preserve us from pride, ambition, and contempt of others, v. 16.

7. Abstaining from evil is but one half of duty. It is not enough to avoid imprecating evil upon our enemies; we must sincerely desire and pray for their welfare. Nor is it sufficient not to recompense evil for evil, we must return good for evil, vs. 17—21.

8. The prerogatives of judgment and vengeance belong to God, we have no right therefore to arrogate them to ourselves, except in those cases in which, for his glory and the good of society, he has given us authority. All condemnation of others for self-gratification, and all private revenge, is inconsistent with the gospel, vs. 11—21.

REMARKS.

1. Christians should never forget that faith without works is dead. It is not more important to believe what God has revealed, than to do what he has commanded. A faith therefore which does not produce love, kindness, sympathy, humility, the forgiveness of injuries, &c. can do us little good, vs. 9—21.

2. It is peculiarly characteristic of the spirit of the gospel that it turns the heart towards others, and away from our own interests. Self is not the Christian's centre; men are loved because they are men, Christians because they are Christians; the former with sincere sympathy and benevolence, the latter with brotherly affection. The happiness and feelings of others, the gospel teaches us to consult in small, as well as in great matters, anticipating each other in all acts of kindness and attention, vs. 9—13.

3. The benevolence of the gospel is active and religious; it leads to constant efforts, and is imbued with a spirit of piety, v. 11.

4. We must remember that without Christ we can do nothing; that it is not we that live, but Christ that liveth in us. If, therefore, we attemp to discharge the duties here enjoined apart from him, we shall be as a branch severed from the vine; and unless we are "instant in prayer," this union with Christ cannot be kept up, v. 12.

5. Alms-giving and hospitality, in various ages of the church, have been unduly exalted, as though they were the whole of benevolence, and the greater part of piety. While we should avoid this extreme, we should remember that we are stewards of God, and that 'Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, hath not the love of God dwelling in him,' v. 13. 1 John 3: 17.

6. One of the most beautiful exhibitions of the character of our Saviou.

was afforded by his conduct under persecution. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter;" "when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not." Even martyrs dying for the truth have not always been able to avoid the prediction of evil to their persecutors; so much easier is it to abstain from recompensing evil for evil, than really to love and pray for the good of our enemies. This, however, is Christian duty; such is the spirit of the gospel. Just so far, therefore, as we find our hearts indisposed to bless those who curse us, or inclined to indulge even a secret satisfaction when evil comes upon them, are we unchristian in our temper, vs. 19—21.

7. Nothing is so powerful as goodness; it is the most efficacious means to subdue enemies and put down opposition. Men, whose minds can withstand argument, and whose hearts rebel against threats, are not proof against the persuasive influence of unfeigned love; there is, therefore, no more important collateral reason for being good, than that it increases our power to do good, vs. 20, 21.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONTENTS.

THIS chapter treats mainly of our political duties. From v. 1 to v. 7 inclusive, the apostle enforces the duties which we owe to civil magistrates. From v. 8 to v. 11, he refers to the more general obligations under which Christians are placed, but still with special reference to their civil and social relations. From v. 11 to the end of the chapter, he enjoins an exemplary and holy deportment.

CHAP. 13: 1—14.

[1]Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. [2]Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. [3]For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of th power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. [4]for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. [5]Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. [6]For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. [7]Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due;* custom to whom cus-

tom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. [8]Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. [9]For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shall not kill, Thou shall not steal, Thou shall not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. [10]Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. [11]And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. [12]The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. [13]Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkeness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. [14]But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lust *thereof*.

ANALYSIS.

The duty of obedience to those in authority is enforced, 1. By the consideration that civil government is a divine institution, and, therefore, resistance to magistrates in the exercise of their lawful authority is disobedience to God, vs. 1, 2. 2. From the end or design of their appointment, which is to promote the good of society, to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well, vs. 3, 4. 3. Because such subjection is a moral, as well as civil duty, v. 5. On these grounds the payment of tributes or taxes, and general deference, are to be cheerfully rendered, vs. 6, 7.

Christians are bound not only to be obedient to those in authority, but also to perform all social and relative duties, especially that of love, which includes and secures the observance of all others, vs. 8—10. A pure and exemplary life as members of society is enforced by the consideration that the night is far spent and that the day is at hand, that the time of suffering and trial is nearly over, and that of deliverance approaching, vs. 11—14.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.* The expression *every soul* is often used as equivalent to *every one*; it is at times, however, emphatic, and such is probably the case in this passage. By *higher powers* is most commonly and naturally understood those in authority, without reference to their grade of office, or their character. We are to be subject not only to the *supreme* magistrates, but to all who have authority over us. The abstract word *powers* or *authorities* is used, as the corresponding terms in most languages, for those who are invested with power, Luke 12: 11. Eph. 1: 21. 3: 10, &c. &c. The word rendered *higher* is applied to any one who, in dignity and authority, excels others. In 1 Pet. 2: 13, it is applied to the king as supreme, i. e. superior to all other magistrates. But here one class of magistrates is not brought into

comparison with another, but they are spoken of as *being over* other men who are not in office.

There was peculiar necessity, during the apostolic age, for inculcating the duty of obedience to civil magistrates. This necessity arose in part from the fact that a large portion of the converts to Christianity had been Jews, and were peculiarly indisposed to submit to the heathen authorities. This indisposition (as far as it was peculiar) arose partly from the prevailing impression among them that this subjection was unlawful, or at least highly derogatory to their character as the people of God, who had so long lived under a theocracy; and partly from their constant expectation of a temporal Messiah.

For there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. This is the ground of the command in the first clause. We must obey our rulers, because government is of divine appointment. It is not a matter which men may or may not have at pleasure; it is the will of God that it should exist, and that those who exercise it should be obeyed within the sphere of their legitimate authority. It is doubtful whether the word *power*, in the first clause of this sentence, is to be taken as abstract or concrete, i. e. whether the meaning is, 'There is no government or authority but of God,' or 'There is no magistrate who is not of God;' every civil magistrate is to be considered as clothed with divine authority. There seems to be little difference, as to the real sense of the passage, between these two modes of interpretation. The main idea obviously is, that government is of divine appointment, and consequently those who resist it disobey God. In the second clause, *the powers that be are ordained of God*, the sense may be either, all governments are ordained of God, or all magistrates are thus ordained. Some commentators insist strenuously on the one mode, and some on the other. But, as just remarked, the sentiment is in either case the same. As the expression *higher powers*, at the beginning of the verse, is almost universally understood of the persons who exercise authority, it would seem most natural to understand the same word in the same manner through the remainder of the verse. All magistrates, of whatever grade, are to be regarded as acting by divine appointment; not that God designates the individuals, but that, it being his will that there should be magistrates, every person who is, in point of fact, clothed with authority is to be regarded as having a claim to obedience, founded on the will of God. In like manner the authority of parents over their children, of husbands over their wives, of masters over their servants, is of God's ordination.

(2) *Whoso, therefore, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God.* This is an obvious inference from the doctrine of the preceding verse. If it is the will of God that there should be civil government, and persons appointed to exercise authority over others, it is plain that to resist such persons in the exercise of their lawful authority is an act of disobedience to God.

And they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. This also is

an obvious conclusion from the preceding. If disobedience is a sin, it will be punished. The word rendered *damnation* means here simply punishment, which is also the old meaning of the word *damnation*. As this word, however, has become restricted to the final and eternal condemnation of the wicked, it is now unsuited to this passage and some others in which it occurs in our version; see 1 Cor. 11: 29. Paul does not refer to the punishment which the civil magistrate may inflict; for he is speaking of disobedience to those in authority as a sin against God, which he will punish.

It is clear that this passage (vs. 1, 2) is applicable to men living under every form of government, monarchial, aristocratical, or democratical, in all their various modifications. Those who are in authority are to be obeyed within their sphere, no matter how or by whom appointed. The extent of this obedience is to be determined from the nature of the case. They are to be obeyed, as magistrates, in the exercise of their lawful authority.

(3) *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.* This verse is not to be connected with the second, but with the first, as it assigns an additional reason for the duty there enjoined. Magistrates are to be obeyed, for such is the will of God, and because they are appointed to repress evil and to promote good. There is a ground, therefore, in the very nature of their office, why they should not be resisted.

Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. That is, government is not an evil to be feared, except by evil doers. The proper way, he tells us, to avoid the punishment which magistrates are authorized to inflict, is not by resistance, but by obedience.

(4) *For he is the minister of God for thee for good*, &c. This whole verse is but an amplification of the preceding. 'Government is a benevolent institution of God, designed for the benefit of men; and, therefore, should be respected and obeyed. As it has, however, the rightful authority to punish, it is to be feared by those that do evil.' *For good*, i. e. to secure or promote your welfare. Magistrates or rulers are not appointed for their own honour or advantage, but for the benefit of society, and, therefore, while those in subjection are on this account to obey them, they themselves are taught, what those in power are so apt to forget, that they are the servants of the people as well as the servants of God, and that the welfare of society is the only legitimate object which they, as rulers, are at liberty to pursue.

But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; a revenger to execute *wrath upon him that doeth evil.* As one part of the design of government is to protect the good, so the other is to punish the wicked. The existence of this delegated authority is, therefore, a reason why men should abstain from the commission of evil. *He beareth not the sword in vain*, i. e. it is not in vain that he is invested with authority to punish. As the common method of inflicting

capital punishment was by decapitation with a sword, that instrument is mentioned as the symbol of the right of punishment, and, as many infer from this passage, of the right of capital punishment.

(5) *Wherefore* ye *must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.* That is, subjection to magistrates is not only a civil duty enforced by penal statutes, but also a religious duty, and part of our obedience to God. *For wrath*, i. e. from fear of punishment. *For conscience' sake*, i. e. out of regard to God, from conscientious motives. In like manner Paul enforces all relative and social duties on religious grounds. Children are to obey their parent, because it is right in the sight of God; and servants are to be obedient to their master, as unto Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, Eph. 6: 1, 5, 6.

(6) *For, for this cause, pay ye tribute also.* This verse may be connected by the words rendered *for* to the preceding, thus, 'Wherefore, (i. e. for conscience' sake), ye should pay tribute also.' But it is better to consider this clause as containing an inference from the foregoing exhibition of the nature and design of civil government. 'Since government is constituted for the benefit of society, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of those that do well, ye should cheerfully pay the contributions requisite for its support.'

For they are the ministers of God, attending continually on this very thing. This clause introduces another reason for payment of tribute. Magistrates are not only appointed for the public good, but they are the ministers of God, and consequently it is his will that we should contribute whatever is necessary to enable them to discharge their duty. The word rendered *ministers* means public servants, men appointed for any public work, civil or religious. Among the Greek democratical states, especially at Athens, those persons were particularly so called who were required to perform some public service at their own expense. It is used in Scripture in a general sense for servants or ministers, Rom. 15: 16. Heb. 1: 7. 8: 2. The words *to this very thing* are most naturally understood as referring to the service which, as the ministers of God, magistrates are called upon to perform. 'They are the servants of God, attending continually to this ministry.' The same idea would be expressed by saying, 'They are appointed by God for the public service;' and this is the reason why the necessary contributions should be faithfully and cheerfully made.

(7) *Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.* 'Such being the will of God, and such the benevolent design of civil government, render to magistrates (and to all others) what properly belongs to them, whether pecuniary contribution, reverence or honour.' The word *all* seems, from the context, to have special reference to all in authority, though it is not necessary to confine it to such persons exclusively. The word *tribute* is applied properly to land and capitation tax; and the word *custom* to the tax levied on merchandise. The words *fear*

and *honour* are generally considered in this connexion as differing only in degree, the former expressing the reverence to superiors, the latter the respect to equals.

(8) *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another*, &c. That is, acquit yourselves of all obligations, except love, which is a debt which must remain ever due. This is the common, and, considering the context which abounds with commands, the most natural interpretation of this passage. The idea which a cursory reader might be disposed to attach to these words, in considering them as a direction not to contract pecuniary debts, is not properly expressed by them; although the prohibition, in its spirit, includes the incurring of such obligations when we have not the certain prospect of discharging them. The command, however is, 'Acquit yourselves of all obligations, tribute, custom, fear, honour, or whatever else you may owe, but remember that the debt of love is still unpaid and always must remain so, for love includes all duty, since he that loves another fulfils the law.'

(9) *For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet, and if* there be *any other commandment it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* This verse is evidently a confirmation of the declaration at the close of the preceding one, that love includes all our social duties. This is further confirmed in the following verse.

(10) *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* That is, as love delights in the happiness of its objects, it effectually prevents us from injuring those we love, and, consequently, leads us to fulfil all the law requires, because the law requires nothing which is not conducive to the best interests of our fellow men. He, therefore, who loves his neighbour with the same sincerity that he loves himself, and consequently treats him as he would wish, under similar circumstances, to be treated by him, will fulfil all that the law enjoins; hence the whole law is comprehended in this one command, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

(11) *And that, knowing the time, that now* it is *high time to awake out of sleep; for now* is *our salvation nearer than when we believed.* From this verse to the end of the chapter, Paul exhorts his readers to discharge the duties already enjoined, and urges on them to live a holy and exemplary life. The consideration by which this exhortation is enforced, is, that the night is far spent and that the day is at hand, the time of deliverance is fast approaching. The words rendered *and that* are by many considered as elliptical, and the word *do* is supplied; "And this *do*.' The demonstrative pronoun, however, is frequently used to mark the importance of the connexion between two circumstances for the case in hand, and is, therefore, often equivalent to the phrases, *and indeed, the more*, &c. So in this case, 'We must discharge our various duties, *and that* knowing, &c. i. e. the rather, because we know, &c.;' compare

Heb. 11: 12. 1 Cor. 6: 6. Eph. 2: 8. *Knowing the time*, i. e. considering the nature and character of the period in which we now live. The original word does not mean *time* in the general, but a portion of time considered as appropriate, as fixed, as short, &c. &c. Paul immediately explains himself by adding, *that now it is high time to awake out of sleep;* it was the proper time to arouse themselves from their slumbers, and, shaking off all slothfulness, to address themselves earnestly to work. *For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.* This is the reason why it is time to be up and active, salvation is at hand. This is not to be understood as implying that the apostles expected the speedy advent of Christ to judgment; because, in the first place, we know that the time of the second advent was not revealed to them; see Matt. 24: 36, 37. Acts 1: 6, 7. 1 Thess. 5: 1, 2. And, secondly, because they expressly teach that 'the day of Christ was not at hand:' see 2 Thess. 2: 1—3. The most natural interpretation of the passage is, that Paul means simply to remind them that the time of deliverance was near; that the difficulties and sins with which they had to contend would soon be dispersed as the shades and mists of night before the rising day. The *salvation*, therefore, here intended, is the consummation of the work of Christ in their deliverance from this present evil world, and introduction into the purity and blessedness of heaven. Eternity is just at hand, is the solemn consideration that Paul urges on his readers as a motive for devotion and diligence.

(12) *The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.* The general sentiment of this verse is very obvious. Night or darkness is the common emblem of sin and sorrow; day or light that of knowledge, purity, and happiness. The meaning of the first clause, therefore, is, that the time of sin and sorrow is nearly over, that of holiness and happiness is at hand.

Paul continues this beautiful figure through the verse. *Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.* That is, let us renounce those things which need to be concealed, and clothe ourselves with those which are suited to the light. *The works of darkness* are those works which men are accustomed to commit in the dark, i. e. all evil works; and *armour of light* means those virtues and good deeds which men are not ashamed of, because they will bear to be seen. Paul probably used the word *armour* instead of *works* because these virtues constitute the offensive and defensive weapons with which we are here to contend against sin and evil; see Eph. 6: 11.

(13) *Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness; not in chambering and wantonness; not in strife and envying.* This verse is an amplification of the preceding, stating some of those works of darkness which we are to put off; as v. 14 states what is the armour of light which we are to put on. The word rendered *honestly* means *becomingly, properly.* There are three classes of sins specified i

this verse, to each of which two words are appropriated, viz. intemperance, impurity, and discord. *Rioting and drunkenness* belong to the first; the word appropriately rendered *rioting* is used both in reference to the disorderly religious festivals kept in honour of Bacchus, and to the common boisterous carousing of intemperate young men. The words *chambering and wantonness* include all kinds of uncleanness; and *strife and envying* all kinds of unholy emulation and discord.

(14) *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*, i. e. be as he was. *To put on Christ* signifies to be intimately united to him, so that he, and not we, may appear, Gal. 3: 27. 'Let not your own evil deeds be seen (i. e. do not commit such), but let what Christ was appear in all your conduct, as effectually as if clothed with the garment of his virtues.'

And make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil *the lusts* thereof. That is, let it not be your care to gratify the flesh. By *flesh* in this passage is generally, perhaps, understood the *body;* so that the prohibition is confined to the vicious indulgence of the sensual appetites. But there seems to be no sufficient reason for this restriction. As the word is constantly used by Paul for whatever is corrupt, and in the preceding verse the sins of envy and contention are specially mentioned, it may be understood more generally, 'Do not indulge the desires of your corrupt nature.'

DOCTRINES.

1. Civil government is a divine institution, i. e. it is the will of God that it should exist, and be respected and obeyed, v. 2.

2. While 'government is of God, the form is of men.' God has never enjoined any one form obligatory on all communities; but has simply laid down certain principles, applicable to rulers and subjects, under every form in which governments exist, vs. 1—7.

3. The obedience which the Scriptures command us to render to our rulers is not unlimited; there are cases in which disobedience is a duty. This is evident, first, from the very nature of the case. The command to obey magistrates is, from its nature, a command to obey them as magistrates in the exercise of their rightful authority. They are not to be obeyed as priests or as parents, but as civil rulers. No one doubts that the precept, "Children, obey your parents in all things," is a command to obey them in the exercise of their rightful parental authority, and imposes no obligation to implicit and passive obedience. A parent who should claim the power of a sovereign over his children, would have no right to their obedience. The case is still plainer with regard to the command, "Wives, submit to your own husbands." Secondly, from the fact that the same inspired men who enjoin, in such general terms, obedience to rulers, themselves uniformly and openly disobeyed them whenever their commands were inconsistent with other and higher obligations. "We ought to obey God rather than men," was the principle which the early Christians avowed, and on which they acted. They disobeyed the Jewish and heathen authorities whenever they required

them to do any thing contrary to the will of God. There are cases therefore, in which disobedience is a duty. How far the rightful authority of rulers extends, the precise point at which the obligation to obedience ceases must often be a difficult question, and each case must be decided on its own merits. The same difficulty exists in fixing the limits of the authority of parents over their children, husbands over their wives, masters over their servants. This, however, is rather a theoretical than a practical difficulty. The general principles on which the question in regard to any given case is to be decided are sufficiently plain. No command to do any thing morally wrong can be binding; nor can any which transcends the rightful authority of the power whence it emanates. What that rightful authority is, must be determined by the institutions and laws of the land, or from prescription and usage, or from the nature and design of the office with which the magistrate is invested. The right of deciding on all these points, and determining where the obligation to obedience ceases, and the duty of resistance begins, must, from the nature of the case, rest with the subject, and not with the ruler. The apostles and early Christians decided this point for themselves, and did not leave the decision with the Jewish or Roman authorities. Like all other questions of duty, it is to be decided on our responsibility to God and our fellow men, vs. 1—7.

4. The design of civil government is not to promote the advantage of rulers, but of the ruled. They are ordained and invested with authority to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well. They are the ministers of God for this end, and are appointed for "this very thing." On this ground our obligation to obedience rests, and the obligation ceases when this design is systematically, constantly, and notoriously disregarded. Where unfaithfulness on the part of the government exists, or where the form of it is incompatible with the design of its institution, the governed must have a right to remedy the evil. But they cannot have the moral right to remedy one evil by the production of a greater. And, therefore, as there are few greater evils than instability and uncertainty in governments, the cases in which revolutions are justifiable must be exceedingly rare, vs. 3—7.

5. The proper sphere of civil government is the civil and social relations of men, and their temporal welfare; conscience, and of course religion, are beyond its jurisdiction, except so far as the best interests of civil society are necessarily connected with them. What extent of ground this exception covers ever has been, and probably will ever remain, a matter of dispute. Still it is to be remembered that it is an exception; religion and morality, as such, are not within the legitimate sphere of the civil authority. To justify the interference of the civil government, therefore, in any given case with these important subjects, an exception must be made out. It must be shown that an opinion, or a religion, is not only false, but that its prevalence is incompatible with the rights of those members of the community who are not embraced

within its communion, before the civil authority can be authorized to interfere for its suppression. It is then to be suppressed, not as a religion, but as a public nuisance. God has ordained civil government for the promotion of the welfare of men as members of the same civil society; and parental government, and the instruction and discipline of the church, for their moral and religious improvement. And the less interference there is between these two great institutions, in the promotion of their respective objects, the better. We do not find in the New Testament any commands addressed to magistrates with regard to the suppression of heresies, or the support of the truth; nor, on the other hand, do we meet with any directions to the church to interfere with matters pertaining to the civil government, vs. 3—6.

6. The discharge of all the social and civil duties of life is, to the Christian, a matter of religious obligation, vs. 5—7.

REMARKS.

1. The Christian religion is adapted to all states of society, and all forms of civil government. As the Spirit of God, when it enters any human heart, leaves unmolested what is peculiar to its individual character, as far as it is innocent, and effects the reformation of what is evil, not by violence, but by a sweetly constraining influence; so the religion of Christ, when it enters any community of men, does not assail their form of government, whether despotic or free; and if there is any thing in their institutions inconsistent with its spirit, it is changed by its silent operation on the heart and conscience, rather than by direct denunciation. It has thus, without rebellion or violent convulsions, curbed the exercise of despotic power, and wrought the abolition of slavery throughout the greater part of Christendom, vs. 1—14.

2. The gospel is equally hostile to tyranny and anarchy. It teaches rulers that they are ministers of God for the public good; and it teaches subjects to be obedient to magistrates, not only for fear, but also for conscience' sake, v. 5.

3. God is to be recognised as ordering the affairs of civil society. "He removeth kings, and he setteth up kings;" by him "kings reign, and princes decree justice." It is enough, therefore, to secure the obedience of the Christian, that in the providence of God, he finds the power of government lodged in certain hands. The early Christians would have been in constant perplexity, had it been incumbent on them, amidst the frequent poisonings and assassinations of the imperial palace, the tumults of the pretorian guards, and the proclamation by contending armies of rival candidates, to decide on the individual who had *de jure* the power of the sword, before they could conscientiously obey, vs. 1—5.

4. When rulers become a terror to the good, and a praise to them that do evil, they may still be tolerated and obeyed, not however of right, but because the remedy may be worse than the disease, vs. 3, 4.

5. Did genuine Christian love prevail, it would secure the right discharge, not only of the duties of rulers towards their subjects and of subjects towards their rulers, but of all the relative social duties of life; for he that loveth another fulfilleth the law, vs. 7, 8.

6. The nearness of eternity should operate on all Christians as a motive to purity and devotedness to God. The night is far spent, the day is at hand, now is our salvation nearer than when we believed, vs. 13, 14.

7. All Christian duty is included in putting on the Lord Jesus; in being like him, having that similarity of temper and conduct which results from being intimately united to him by the Holy Spirit, v. 14.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONTENTS.

As in chapter 12, Paul had insisted principally upon moral and religious duties, and in chapter 13, on those of a political character, he here treats particularly of the duties of church members towards each other, in relation to matters not binding on the conscience. There are two points specially presented; the first is the manner in which scrupulous Christians, who make conscience of matters of indifference, are to be treated, vs. 1—12; and the second, the manner in which those who are strong in faith should use their Christian liberty, vs. 13—23.

CHAP. 14: 1—23.

[1]Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. [2]For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. [3]Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. [4]Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. [5]One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. [6]He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. [7]For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. [8]For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. [9]For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. [10]But why dost thou

judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. [11]For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. [12]So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. [13]Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way. [14]I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. [15]But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. [16]Let not then your good be evil spoken of: [17]For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. [18]For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men. [19]Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. [20]For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. [21]*It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. [22]Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. [23]And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth not* of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

ANALYSIS.

Scrupulous Christians, whose consciences are weak, are to be kindly received, and not harshly condemned, v. 1. This direction the apostle enforces in reference to those who were scrupulous as to eating particular kinds of meat, and the propriety of neglecting the sacred days appointed in the law of Moses. Such persons are not to be condemned, 1. Because this weakness is not inconsistent with piety; notwithstanding their doubts on these points, God has received them, v. 3. 2. Because one Christian has no right to judge another (except where Christ has expressly authorized it and given him the rule of judgment); to his own master he stands or falls, v. 4. 3. Because such harsh treatment is unnecessary; God can and will preserve such persons, notwithstanding their feebleness, v. 4. 4. Because they act religiously, or out of regard to God in this matter; and therefore, live according to the great Christian principle, that no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself, but whether he lives or dies belongs to God, vs. 6—9. On these grounds we should abstain from condemning or treating contemptuously our weaker brethren, remembering that we are all to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, vs. 10—12.

As to the use of Christian liberty, the apostle teaches that it is not to be given up or denied; that is, we are not to make things sinful which are in themselves indifferent, v. 14. But it does not follow that because

a thing is not wrong in itself, it is right for us to indulge in it. Our liberty is to be asserted, but it is to be exercised in such a way as not to injure others. We must not put a stumbling-block in our brother's way, v. 12. This consideration of others in the use of our liberty is enforced, 1. From the great law of love; it is inconsistent with Christian charity, for our own gratification, to injure a brother for whom Christ died, v. 15. 2. From a regard to the honour of religion. We must not cause that which is good to be evil spoken of, v. 16. 3. From the consideration that religion does not consist in such things, vs. 17, 18. 4. Because we are bound to promote the peace and edification of the church, v. 19. 5. Though the things in question may be in themselves indifferent, it is morally wrong to indulge in them to the injury of others, vs. 20, 21. 6. The course enjoined by the apostle requires no concession of principle, or adoption of error; we can retain our full belief of the indifference of things which God has not pronounced sinful; but those who have not our faith cannot act upon it, and therefore, should not be encouraged so to do, vs. 22, 23.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *Him that is weak in faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations.* This verse contains the general direction that weak and scrupulous brethren are to be kindly received, and not harshly condemned. *Weak in faith*, i. e. weak as to faith. *Faith* here means persuasion of the truth; a man may have a strong persuasion as to certain truths, and a very weak one as to others. Some of the early Christians were, no doubt, fully convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and yet felt great doubts whether the distinction between clean and unclean meats was entirely done away. This was certainly a great defect of Christian character, and arose from the want of an intelligent and firm conviction of the gratuitous nature of justification, and of the spirituality of the gospel. Since, however, this weakness was not inconsistent with religion, such persons were to be *received.* The word rendered *receive* has the general signification *to take to one-self;* and this is its meaning here. 'Him that is weak in faith take to yourselves as a Christian brother, treat him kindly;" see Acts 28: 2. Rom. 15: 7. Philem. vs. 15, 17.

There is much more doubt as to the meaning of the words translated *not to doubtful disputations.* The former of the two important words of this clause means *the faculty of discrimination*, 1 Cor. 12: 10; *the act of discerning*, Heb. 5: 14, and then *dijudication, judgment.* It may also signify *doubt* or *inward conflict;* see the use of the verb in ch. 4: 20. It is taken in this sense in our version, *not to the doubtfulness of disputes*, i. e. not for the purpose of doubtful disputation. The word rendered *disputations* means also *thoughts, opinions.* The clause may therefore mean *not to the judging of* (his) *opinions*, i. e. not for the purpose of judging his opinions; do not act the part of a judge over him. This sense seems preferable on account of the context, as Paul enforces

this direction by showing them that they had no right to sit in judgment on their brethren in such matters.

(2) *For one believeth he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.* This is an illustration of the weakness of faith to which the apostle refers in v. 1. It was a scrupulousness about the use of things considered as unclean, and with regard to sacred days, v. 5. It is most probable that the scrupulous Christians, to whom the apostle here refers, were of Jewish origin, who had not been able to shake off their early opinions respecting the distinction between clean and unclean meats. The fact that they abstained from all meat, as seems to be intimated in this verse, may have arisen from the constant apprehension of eating meat which, after having been presented in sacrifice, was sold in the market place, or which had in some other way been rendered unclean.*

(3) *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him.* There is mutual forbearance to be exercised in relation to this subject. The strong are not to despise the weak as superstitious and imbecile; nor the weak to condemn those who disregard their scruples. Points of indifference are not to be allowed to disturb the harmony of Christian fellowship. *For God hath received him*, i. e. God has recognised him as a Christian, and received him into his kingdom. This reason is not designed to enforce merely the latter of the two duties here enjoined, but is applied to both. As God does not make eating or not eating certain kinds of food a condition of acceptance, Christians ought not to allow it to interfere with their communion as brethren.

(4) *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.* If God has not made the point in question a term of communion, we have no right to do so; we have no right to exercise the office of judge over the servant of another. This is the second reason for mutual forbearance with regard to such matters as divided the Jewish and Gentile converts. It cannot fail to be remarked how differently the apostle speaks of the same things under different circumstances. He who circumcised Timothy, who conformed in many things to the law of Moses, and to the Jews became a Jew, and who here exhorts Christians to regard their external observances as matters of indifference, resisted to the uttermost as soon as these things were urged as matters of importance, or were insisted upon as necessary to acceptance with God. He would not allow Titus to be circumcised, nor give place even for an hour to false brethren, who had come in privily to spy out our liberty. Gal. 2: 3, 5. What might be safely granted, if asked and given as a matter of indifference, became a fatal apostasy when demanded as a matter of necessity or a condition of salvation.

* Josephus states in his life (ch. 23) that certain Jewish priests, while at Rome, lived entirely upon fruit, from the dread of eating any thing unclean.

To his own master he standeth or falleth, i. e. it belongs to his own master to decide his case, to acquit or to condemn. These terms are often used in this judicial sense, Ps. 1: 5. 76: 7. Luke 21: 36. Rev. 6: 17. *Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand*, i. e. he shall stand, or be accepted, for God has the right and the will to make him stand, that is, to acquit and save him. This clause seems designed to urge a further reason for forbearance and kindness towards those who differ from us on matters of indifference. However weak a man's faith may be, if he is a Christian, he should be recognised and treated as such: for his weakness is not inconsistent with his acceptance with God, and therefore is no ground of necessity for our proceeding against him with severity. The objects of discipline are the reformation of offenders and the purification of the church; but neither of these objects requires the condemnation of those brethren whom God has received. "God is *able* to make him stand;" he has not only the power, but the disposition and determination. Compare ch. 11: 23, "For God is able to graft them in again."

(5) *One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day* alike. As the law of Moses not only made a distinction between meats as clean and unclean, but also prescribed the observance of certain days as religious festivals, the Jewish converts were as scrupulous with regard to this latter point as the former. Some Christians, therefore, thought it incumbent on them to observe these days; others were of a contrary opinion. Both were to be tolerated. The veneration of these days was a weakness, but still it was not a vital matter, and therefore should not be allowed to disturb the harmony of Christian intercourse, or the peace of the church. It is obvious from the context, and from such parallel passages as Gal. 4: 10, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years," and Col. 2: 16, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of Sabbath days," that Paul has reference to the Jewish festivals, and therefore his language cannot properly be applied to the Christian Sabbath. The sentiment of the passage is this, 'One man observes the Jewish festivals, another man does not.' Such we know was the fact in the apostolic church, even among those who agreed in the observance of the first day of the week.

Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. The principle, which the apostle enforces in reference to this case, is the same as that which he enjoined in relation to the other, viz. that one man should not be forced to act according to another man's conscience, but every one should be satisfied in his own mind, and be careful not to do what he thought wrong.

(6) *He that regardeth the day, regardeth* it *unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard* it. *He that eateth, eateth to the Lord*, &c. That is, both parties are actuated by religious motives in what they do; they regulate their conduct by a regard

to the will of God, and, therefore, although some from weakness or ignorance may err as to the rule of duty, they are not to be despised or cast out as evil. The strong should not condemn the scrupulous, nor the scrupulous be censorious towards the strong. This is a fourth argument in favour of the mutual forbearance enjoined in the first verse. *He that eateth, eateth to the Lord; for he giveth God thanks*, &c. That is, he who disregards the Mosaic distinction between clean and unclean meats, and uses indiscriminately the common articles of food, acts religiously in so doing, as is evident from his giving God thanks. He could not deliberately thank God for what he supposed God had forbidden him to use. In like manner, he that abstains from certain meats does it religiously, for he also giveth thanks to God; which implies that he regards himself as acting agreeably to the divine will.

(7) *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.* This verse is an amplification and confirmation of the preceding. The principle on which both the classes of persons just referred to acted, is a true Christian principle. No Christian considers himself as his own master, or at liberty to regulate his conduct according to his own will, or for his own ends; he is the servant of God, and, therefore, endeavours to live according to his will and for his glory. They, therefore, who act on this principle, are to be regarded and treated as true Christians, although they may differ as to what the will of God, in particular cases, requires. *No man dieth to himself*, i. e. death as well as life must be left in the hands of God, to be directed by his will and for his glory. The sentiment is, we are entirely his, having no authority over our life or death.

(8) *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.* The same sentiment as in the preceding verse, rather more fully and explicitly stated. In v. 7, Paul had stated, negatively, that the Christian does not live according to his own will, or for his own pleasure; he here states, affirmatively, that he does live according to the will of Christ and for his glory. This being the case, he is a true Christian; he belongs to Christ, and should be so recognised and treated. It is very obvious, especially from the following verse, which speaks of death and resurrection, that Christ is intended by the word *Lord* in this verse. It is for Christ, and in subjection to his will, that every Christian endeavours to regulate his heart, his conscience, and his life. This is the profoundest homage the creature can render to his Creator; and as it is the service which the Scriptures require us to render to the Redeemer, it of necessity supposes that Christ is God. This is rendered still plainer by the interchange, throughout the passage (vs. 6—9), of the terms Lord and God. 'He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks. We live unto the Lord; we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose, that he might be the Lord,' &c. It is clear that, to the apostle's mind, the idea that Christ is God was perfectly familiar.

(9) *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he*

might be Lord both of the dead and living. The dominion which Christ, as Mediator or Redeemer, exercises over his people, and which they gladly recognise, is the result of his death and resurrection. By his death he purchased them for his own, and by his resurrection he attained to that exalted station which he now occupies as Lord over all, and received those gifts which enable him to exercise as Mediator this universal dominion. The exaltation and dominion of Christ are frequently represented in the Scriptures as the reward of his sufferings, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow," &c. Phil. 2: 8, 9. This authority of Christ over his people is not confined to this world, but extends beyond the grave. He is Lord both of the dead and the living.

(10) *But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.* In this and the following verses, to the thirteenth, Paul applies his previous reasoning to the case in hand. If a man is our *brother*, if God has received him, if he acts from a sincere desire to do the divine will, he should not be condemned, though he may think certain things right which we think wrong; nor should he be despised if he trammels his conscience with unnecessary scruples. The former of these clauses relates to scrupulous Jewish Christians; the latter to the Gentile converts. The last member of the verse applies to both classes. As we are all to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, as he is our sole and final judge, we should not usurp his prerogative, or presume to condemn those whom he has received.

(11) *For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess.* This quotation is from Isa 45: 23, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear." The apostle, it will be perceived, does not adhere to the words of the passage which he quotes, but contents himself with giving the sense. *As I live*, being the form of an oath, is a correct exhibition of the meaning of the phrase *I have sworn by myself.* And, since to swear by any being is to recognise his power and authority over us, the expressions *every tongue shall swear* and *every tongue shall confess* are of similar import. Both indeed are parallel to the clause *every knee shall bow*, and are but different forms of expressing the general idea that every one shall submit to God, i. e. recognise his authority as God, the supreme Ruler and Judge. The apostle evidently considers the recognition of the authority of Christ as being tantamount to submission to God; and he applies, without hesitation, the declarations of the Old Testament in relation to the universal dominion of Jehovah in proof of the Redeemer's sovereignty. With him, therefore, Jesus Christ was God.

(12) *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God*

'As, therefore, God is the supreme Judge, and we are to render our account to him, we should await his decision, and not presume to act the part of judge over our brethren.'

(13) *Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more;* but *judge this, rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way.* After drawing the conclusion from the preceding discussion that we should leave the office of judging in the hands of God, the apostle introduces the second leading topic of the chapter, viz. the manner in which Christian liberty is to be exercised. He teaches that it is not enough that we are persuaded a certain course is, in itself considered, right, in order to authorize us to pursue it. We must be careful that we do not injure others in the use of our liberty. The word rendered *judge* means also *to determine, to make up one's mind.* Paul uses it first in the one sense, and then in the other. 'Do not judge one another, but determine to avoid giving offence.' The words rendered *a stumbling-block* and *an occasion to fall* do not differ in their meaning; the latter is simply exegetical of the former.

(14) *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that* there is *nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.* 'The distinction between clean and unclean meats is no longer valid. So far the Gentile converts are right. But they should remember that those who consider the law of the Old Testament on this subject as still binding, cannot, with a good conscience, disregard it. The strong should not, therefore, do any thing which would be likely to lead such persons to violate their own sense of duty.' *I know and am persuaded by* (in) *the Lord Jesus,* i. e. this knowledge and persuasion I owe to the Lord Jesus; it is not an opinion founded on my own reasonings, but a knowledge resulting from divine revelation. *That there is nothing unclean of itself.* The word rendered *unclean* has this sense only in Hellenistic Greek. It means *common,* and, as opposed to *holy* (i. e. separated for some special or sacred use), it signifies *impure;* see Acts 10: 14, 28. Mark 7: 2, &c. *But to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean,* i. e. though not unclean in itself, it ought not to be used by those who regard its use as unlawful. The simple principle here taught is, that it is wrong for any man to violate his own sense of duty. This being the case, those Jewish converts who believed the distinction between clean and unclean meats to be still in force, would commit sin in disregarding it; and, therefore, should not be induced to act contrary to their consciences.

(15) *But if thy brother be grieved with* thy *meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.* That is, though the thing is right in itself, yet if indulgence in it be injurious to our Christian brethren, that indulgence is a violation of the law of love. This is the first consideration which the apostle urges to enforce the exhortation not to put a stumbling-block in our brother's way The word *is grieved* may mean *is injured.* Either sense suits the context

'If thy brother, imboldened by thy example, is led to do what he thinks wrong, and is thus rendered miserable,' &c. Or, 'If thy brother, by thy example, is injured (by being led into sin), thou walkest uncharitably.' This interpretation is perhaps better suited to the latter clause of the verse. *Destroy not.* These words have been variously explained. The meaning may be, 'Do not do any thing which has a tendency to lead him to destruction.' Or, 'Do not injure him, or render him miserable.' There is no material difference between these two interpretations. The former is more consistent with the common meaning of the original word, but the latter is better suited to the context, as this clause answers to the first member of the verse. 'If thy brother be aggrieved, thou doest wrong; do not grieve or injure him.' *For whom Christ died.* This is most effectively added. 'If Christ so loved him as to die for him, how base in you not to submit to the smallest self-denial for his welfare.'

(16) *Let not your good be evil spoken of*, i. e. 'Do not so use your liberty, which is good and valuable, as to make it the occasion of evil, and so liable to censure.' This interpretation is better suited to the context than that which makes *the good* here intended to be the Christian religion generally; 'Let not religion be reproached on account of dissension on such minor points.' The general idea, however, is the same. 'Do not subject the truth to unmerited obloquy.'

(17) *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* This is a new reason for forbearance; no principle of duty is to be sacrificed, nothing essential to religion is to be disregarded, for religion does not consist in external observances, but in the inward graces of the Spirit. The phrase *kingdom of God* almost uniformly signifies the *kingdom of the Messiah*, under some one of its aspects, as consisting of all professing Christians, of all his own people, of glorified believers, or as existing in the heart. "The kingdom of God is within you;" see also 1 Cor. 4: 20. This last sense best suits this passage, 'Religion does not consist in the external observance, but in the graces of the Spirit.' *Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* The last words, *in the Holy Ghost*, pertain to the whole clause. Religion consists in that righteousness, peace and joy, of which the Holy Ghost is the author. The word *righteousness* is to be taken in its common sense, *moral excellence*, *goodness*, *peace*, not exclusively concord with brethren, but that inward peace of conscience, and peace with God, which is the attendant on reconciliation (Rom. 5: 1); *and joy* resulting from a sense of the divine favour and the anticipation of future blessedness.

(18) *For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of men.* This verse is a confirmation of the preceding. These spiritual graces constitute the essential part of religion; for he that experiences and exercises these virtues, is regarded by God as a true Christian, and must commend himself as such to the consciences of his fellow men. Where these things, therefore, are found, difference of opinion or

practice in reference to unessential points should not be allowed to disturb the harmony of Christian intercourse. It is to be observed that the exercise of the virtues here spoken of, is represented by the apostle as a service rendered to Christ; "he that in these things serveth Christ, &c.," which implies that Christ has authority over the heart and conscience.

(19) *Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another.* That is, let us earnestly endeavour to promote peace and mutual edification. *The things which make for peace* is equivalent to peace itself, and *things wherewith one may edify another* is *mutual edification.* This verse is not an inference from the immediately preceding, as though the meaning were, 'Since peace is so acceptable to God, therefore let us cultivate it;' but rather from the whole passage. 'Since Christian love, the example of Christ, the comparative insignificance of the matters in dispute, the honour of the truth, the nature of real religion, all conspire to urge us to mutual forbearance, let us endeavour to promote peace and mutual edification.'

(20) *For meat destroy not the work of God.* This clause is, by many commentators, considered as a repetition of v. 15. "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." *The work of God* then means a Christian brother; see Eph. 2: 10. Others much more naturally refer the passage to the immediately preceding verses, in which the nature of true religion is exhibited. *The work of God*, in that case, is *piety*, and the exhortation is, 'Do not, for the sake of indulgence in certain kinds of food, injure the cause of true religion, i. e. pull not down what God is building up.' The figurative expression used by the apostle (*pull not down*), shows that the reference is to the preceding verse; compare Gal. 2: 18.

All things indeed are *pure; but* it is *evil for that man who eateth with offence.* The ground on which forbearance is urged, is not that the things in question are in themselves evil, but solely that the use of them is injurious to others. 'All articles of food are in themselves innocent, but it is wrong in any man so to use them as to give offence, i. e. as to cause others to stumble.' *With offence*, i. e. *offensively*, so as to give offence. The same sentiment occurs in 1 Cor. 8: 9, "But take heed, lest by any means this liberty become a stumbling-block to them that are weak."

(21) It is *good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor* any thing *whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.* That is, abstaining from flesh, wine, or any thing else which is injurious to our brethren, is right, i. e. morally obligatory. The words *stumbleth, offended, made weak*, do not in this connexion, differ much from each other. The ground on which some of the early Christians thought it incumbent on them to abstain from wine, was not any general ascetic principle, but because they feared they might be led to use wine which had been offered to the gods; to which they had the same objection as to meat which had been presented in sacrifice.

(22) *Hast thou faith? have it thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth.* Paul presents in this verse, more distinctly than he had before done, the idea that he required no concession of principle or renunciation of truth. He did not wish them to believe a thing to be sinful which was not sinful, or to trammel their own consciences with the scruples of their weaker brethren. He simply required them to use their liberty in a considerate and charitable manner. He therefore, here says, 'Hast thou faith? (i. e. a firm persuasion of the lawfulness of all kinds of meat) it is well, do not renounce it, but retain it and use it piously as in the sight of God.' By *faith* here seems clearly to be understood *the faith* of which Paul had been speaking in the context; a faith which some Christians had, and others had not, viz. a firm belief "that there is nothing (no meat) unclean of itself." *Have it to thyself*, keep it to yourself. There are two ideas included in this phrase. The first is, keep it privately, i. e. do not parade it, or make it a point to show that you are above the weak scruples of your brethren; and the second is, that this faith or firm conviction is not to be renounced, but retained, for it is founded on the truth. *Before God*, i. e. in the sight of God. It is to be cherished in our hearts, and used in a manner acceptable to God. Being right in itself, it is to be piously, and not ostentatiously or injuriously paraded and employed.

Blessed is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth. That is, blessed is the man that has a good conscience; who does not allow himself to do what he secretly condemns. The faith, therefore, of which the apostle had spoken, is a great blessing. It is a source of great happiness to be sure that what we do is right, and, therefore, the firm conviction to which some Christians had attained, was not to be undervalued or renounced. Compare ch. 1: 28. 1 Cor, 16: 3, for a similar use of the word here employed.

(23) *But he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because* he eateth *not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.* That is, if a man thinks a thing to be wrong, to him it is wrong. He therefore who is uncertain whether God has commanded him to abstain from certain meats, and who notwithstanding indulges in them, evidently sins; he brings himself under condemnation. Because whatever is not of faith is sin: i. e. whatever we do which we are not sure is right, is wrong. The sentiment of this verse therefore is nearly the same as of v. 14. "To him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." There is evidently a sinful disregard of the divine authority on the part of a man who does any thing which he supposes God has forbidden, or which he is not certain he has allowed. This passage has an obvious bearing on the design of the apostle. He wished to convince the stronger Christians that it was unreasonable in them to expect their weaker brethren to act according to their faith; and that it was sinful in them so to use their liberty as to induce these scrupulous Christians to violate their own consciences.

DOCTRINES.

1. The fellowship of the saints is not to be broken for unessential matters; in other words, we have no right to make any thing a term of Christian communion which is not inconsistent with piety. Paul evidently argues on the principle that if a man is a true Christian he should be recognised and treated as such. If God has received him, we should receive him, vs. 1—12.

2. The true criterion of a Christian character is found in the governing purpose of the life. He that lives unto the Lord, i. e. he who makes the will of God the rule of his conduct, and the glory of God his constant object is a true Christian, although from weakness or ignorance he may sometimes mistake the rule of duty, and consider certain things obligatory which God has never commanded, vs. 6—8.

3. Jesus Christ must be truly God, 1. Because he is the Lord, according to whose will and for whose glory we are to live, vs. 6—8. 2. Because he exercises an universal dominion over the living and the dead, v. 9. 3. Because he is the final judge of all men, v. 10. 4. Because passages of the Old Testament which are spoken of Jehovah, are by the apostle applied to Christ, v. 11. 5. Because, throughout this passage, Paul speaks of God and Christ indiscriminately, in a manner which shows that he regarded Christ as God. To live unto Christ is to live unto God; to stand before the judgment seat of Christ is to give an account unto God; to submit to Christ is to bow the knee to Jehovah.

4. The gospel does not make religion to consist in external observances. "Meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat are we the better; neither if we eat not are we the worse," vs. 6, 7.

5. Though a thing may be lawful, it is not always expedient. The use of the liberty which every Christian enjoys under the gospel, is to be regulated by the law of love; hence it is often morally wrong to do what, in itself considered, may be innocent, vs. 15, 20, 21.

6. It is a great error in morals, and a great practical evil, to make that sinful which is in fact innocent. Christian love never requires this or any other sacrifice of truth. Paul would not consent, for the sake of avoiding offence, that eating all kinds of food, even what had been offered to idols, or disregarding sacred festivals of human appointment, should be made a sin; he strenuously and openly maintained the reverse. He represents those who thought differently as weak in faith, as being under an error from which more knowledge and more piety would free them. Concession to their weakness he enjoins on a principle perfectly consistent with the assertion of the truth, and with the preservation of Christian liberty, vs. 13—23.

7. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. It is wrong to do any thing which we think to be wrong. The converse of this proposition, however, is not true. It is not always right to do what we think to be right. Paul, before his conversion, thought it right to persecute Christians; the Jews thought they did God service when they cast the disciples of the Saviour out of

the synagogue. The cases therefore are not parallel. When we do what we think God has forbidden, we are evidently guilty of disobedience or contempt of the divine authority. But when we do what we think he has required, we may act under a culpable mistake; or, although we may have the judgment that the act in itself is right, our motives for doing it may be very wicked. The state of mind under which Paul and other Jews persecuted the early Christians was evil, though the persecution itself they regarded as a duty. It is impossible that a man should have right motives for doing a wrong action; for the very mistake as to what is right vitiates the motives. The mistake implies a wrong state of mind; and, on the other hand, the misapprehension of truth produces a wrong state of mind. There may, therefore, be a very sinful zeal for God and religion (see Rom. 10: 2); and no man will be able to plead at the bar of judgment his good intention as an excuse for evil conduct, v. 23.

REMARKS.

1. Christians should not allow any thing to alienate them from their brethren, who afford credible evidence that they are the servants of God. Owing to ignorance, early prejudice, weakness of faith, and other causes, there may and must exist a diversity of opinion and practice on minor points of duty. But this diversity is no sufficient reason for rejecting from Christian fellowship any member of the family of Christ. It is, however, one thing to recognise a man as a Christian, and another to recognise him as a suitable minister of a church, organized on a particular form of government and system of doctrines, vs. 1—12.

2. A denunciatory or censorious spirit is hostile to the spirit of the gospel. It is an encroachment on the prerogatives of the only Judge of the heart and conscience; it blinds the mind to moral distinctions, and prevents the discernment between matters unessential and those vitally important; and it leads us to forget our own accountableness, and to overlook our own faults in our zeal to denounce those of others, vs. 4—10.

3. It is sinful to indulge contempt for those whom we suppose to be our inferiors, vs. 3, 10.

4. Christians should remember that living or dying they are the Lord's. This imposes the obligation to observe his will and to seek his glory; and it affords the assurance that the Lord will provide for all their wants. This peculiar propriety in his own people Christ has obtained by his death and resurrection, vs. 8, 9.

5. We should stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not allow our consciences to be brought under the yoke of bondage to human opinions. There is a strong tendency in men to treat, as matters of conscience, things which God has never enjoined. Wherever this disposition has been indulged or submitted to, it has resulted in bringing one class of men under the most degrading bondage to another; and in the still more serious evil of leading them to disregard the authority

of God. Multitudes who would be shocked at the thought of eating meat during Lent, commit the greatest moral offences without the slightest compunction. It is, therefore, of great importance to keep the conscience free; under no subjection but to truth and God. This is necessary, not only on account of its influence on our own moral feelings, but also because nothing but truth can really do good. To advocate even a good cause with bad arguments does great harm, by exciting unnecessary opposition; by making good men, who oppose the arguments, appear to oppose the cause; by introducing a false standard of duty; by failing to enlist the support of an enlightened conscience, and by the necessary forfeiture of the confidence of the intelligent and well informed. The cause of benevolence, therefore, instead of being promoted, is injured by all exaggerations, erroneous statements, and false principles on the part of its advocates, vs. 14, 22.

6. It is obviously incumbent on every man to endeavour to obtain and promote right views of duty, not only for his own sake, but for the sake of others. It is often necessary to assert our Christian liberty at the expense of incurring censure and offending even good men, in order that right principles of duty may be preserved. Our Saviour consented to be regarded as a Sabbath-breaker, and even "a wine-bibber and friend of publicans and sinners;" but wisdom was justified of her children. Christ did not in these cases see fit to accommodate his conduct to the rule of duty set up, and conscientiously regarded as correct by those around him. He saw that more good would arise from a practical disregard of the false opinions of the Jews, as to the manner in which the Sabbath was to be kept, and as to the degree of intercourse which was allowed with wicked men, than from concession to their prejudices. Enlightened benevolence often requires a similar course of conduct, and a similar exercise of self-denial on the part of his disciples.

7. While Christian liberty is to be maintained, and right principles of duty inculcated, every concession consistent with truth and good morals should be made for the sake of peace and the welfare of others. It is important, however, that the duty of making such concessions should be placed on the right ground, and be urged in a right spirit, not as a thing to be demanded, but as that which the law of love requires. In this way success is more certain and more extensive, and the concomitant results are all good. It may at times be a difficult practical question, whether most good would result from compliance with the prejudices of others, or from disregarding them. But where there is a sincere desire to do right, and a willingness to sacrifice our own inclinations for the good of others, connected with prayer for divine direction, there can be little danger of serious mistake. Evil is much more likely to arise from a disregard to the opinions and the welfare of our brethren, and from a reliance on our own judgment, than from any course requiring self-denial, vs. 13, 15, 20, 21.

8 Conscience, or a sense of duty, is not the only, and perhaps not the

most important principle to be appealed to in support of benevolent enterprises. It comes in aid, and gives its sanction to all other right motives, but we find the sacred writers appealing most frequently to the benevolent and pious feelings; to the example of Christ; to a sense of our obligations to him; to the mutual relation of Christians and their common connexion with the Redeemer, &c. as motives to self-denial and devotedness, vs. 15, 21.

9. As the religion of the gospel consists in the inward graces of the Holy Spirit, all who have these graces should be recognised as genuine Christians; being acceptable to God, they should be loved and cherished by his people, notwithstanding their weakness or errors, vs. 17, 18.

10. The peace and edification of the church are to be sought at all sacrifices except those of truth and duty; and the work of God is not to be destroyed or injured for the sake of any personal or party interest, vs. 19, 20.

11. An enlightened conscience is a great blessing; it secures the liberty of the soul from bondage to the opinions of men, and from the self-inflicted pains of a scrupulous and morbid state of the moral feelings; and it promotes the right exercise of all the virtuous affections, and the right discharge of all relative duties, v. 22.

CHAPTER XV.

CONTENTS.

This chapter consists of two parts. In the former, vs. 1—13, the apostle enforces the duty urged in the preceding chapter by considerations derived principally from the example of Christ. In the latter part, vs. 14—33, we have the conclusion of the whole discussion, in which he speaks of his confidence in the Roman Christians, of his motives for writing to them, of his apostolical office and labours, and of his purpose to visit Rome after fulfilling his ministry for the saints at Jerusalem.

CHAP. 15: 1—13.

[1]We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. [2]Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. [3]For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. [4]For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. [5]Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-

minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: 6that ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. 8Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers: 9and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. 10And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. 11And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. 12And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. 13Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

ANALYSIS.

The first verse of this chapter is a conclusion from the whole of the preceding. On the grounds there presented Paul repeats the command that the strong should bear with the infirmities of the weak, and that, instead of selfishly regarding their own interests merely, they should endeavour to promote the welfare of their brethren, vs. 1, 2. This duty he enforces by the conduct of Christ, who has set us an example of perfect disinterestedness, as what he suffered was not for himself, v. 3. This, and similar facts and sentiments recorded in the Scripture, are intended for our admonition, and should be applied for that purpose, v. 4. The apostle prays that God would bestow on them that harmony and unanimity which he had urged them to cultivate, vs. 5, 6. He repeats the exhortation that they should receive one another, even as Christ had received them, v. 7. He shows how Christ had received them, and united Jews and Gentiles in one body, vs. 8—13.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.* The separation of this passage from the preceding chapter is obviously unhappy, as there is no change in the subject. 'As the points of difference are not essential, as the law of love, the example of Christ, and the honour of religion require concession, we that are fully persuaded of the indifference of those things about which our weaker brethren are so scrupulous, ought to accommodate ourselves to their opinions, and not act with a view to our own gratification merely.' *We that are strong: strong* in reference to the subject of discourse, i. e. faith, especially faith in the Christian doctrine of the lawfulness of all kinds of food, and the abrogation of the Mosaic law. *Ought to bear*, i. e. ought to tolerate. The *infirmities*, that is, the prejudices, errors, and faults which arise from weakness of faith. Compare 1 Cor. 9: 20—22, where the apostle illustrates this command by stating

how he himself acted in relation to this subject. *And not to please ourselves;* we are not to do every thing which we may have a right to do, and make our own gratification the rule by which we exercise our Christian liberty.

(2) *Let each one of us please* his *neighbour, for* his *good to edification.* The principle which is stated negatively at the close of the preceding verse, is here stated affirmatively. We are not to please ourselves, but others; the law of love is to regulate our conduct; we are not simply to ask what is right in itself, or what is agreeable, but what is benevolent and pleasing to our brethren. The object which we should have in view in accommodating ourselves to others, however, is their good. *For good to edification* most probably means with a view to his good, so that he may be edified. The latter words, *to edification*, are, therefore, explanatory of the former; the good we should contemplate is their religious improvement; which is the sense in which Paul frequently uses the word *edification;* ch. 14: 19. 2 Cor. 10: 8. Eph. 4: 12, 29. It is not, therefore, a weak compliance with the wishes of others to which Paul exhorts us, but to the exercise of an enlightened benevolence; to such compliances as have the design and tendency to promote the spiritual welfare of our neighbour.

(3) *For even Christ pleased not himself, but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.* 'For *even* Christ, so infinitely exalted above all Christians, was perfectly disinterested and condescending.' The example of Christ is constantly held up, not merely as a model, but a motive. The disinterestedness of Christ is here illustrated by a reference to the fact, that he suffered not for himself, but for the glory of God. The sorrow which he felt was, not on account of his own privations and injuries, but zeal for God's service consumed him, and it was the dishonour which was cast on God that broke his heart. The simple point to be illustrated is the disinterestedness of Christ, the fact that he did not please himself. And this is most affectingly done by saying, in the language of the psalmist (Ps. 69: 9), "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me;" that is, such was my zeal for thee, that the reproaches cast on thee I felt as if directed against myself. This psalm is so frequently quoted and applied to Christ in the New Testament, that it must be considered as directly prophetical. Compare John 2: 17. 15: 25. 19: 28. Acts 1: 20.

(4) *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.* The object of this verse is not so much to show the propriety of applying the passage quoted from the Psalms to Christ, as to show that the facts recorded in the Scriptures are designed for our instruction. The character of Christ is there portrayed, that we may follow his example, and imbibe his spirit. The words *through patience and consolation of the scriptures* may be taken together, and mean,

through that patience and consolation which the scriptures produce;' or the words *through patience* may be disconnected from the word *scriptures*, and the sense be, 'that we, through patience, and *through* the consolation of the scriptures,' &c. The former method is the most commonly adopted, and is the most natural. *Might have hope;* this may mean that the design of the divine instructions is, to prevent all despondency, to sustain us under our present trials; or the sense is, that they are intended to secure the attainment of the great object of our hopes, the blessedness of heaven. Either interpretation of the word *hope* is consistent with usage, and gives a good sense.

(5) *Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one towards another, according to Jesus Christ.* 'May God, who is the author of patience and consolation, grant,' &c. Here the *graces*, which in the preceding verse are ascribed to the Scriptures, are attributed to God as their author, because he produces them by his Spirit through the instrumentality of the truth. Paul prays that God would grant them that concord and unanimity which he had so strongly exhorted them to cherish. The expression *to be like minded* does not here refer to unanimity of opinion, but to harmony of feeling; see ch. 8: 5. 12: 3. *According to Jesus Christ*, i. e. agreeably to the example and command of Christ; in a Christian manner. It is, therefore, to a Christian union that he exhorts them.

(6) *That ye may with one mind and with one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* This harmony and fellowship among Christians is necessary in order that they may glorify God aright. To honour God effectually and properly, there must be no unnecessary dissensions among his people. *God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, means either that God who is the Father of the Lord Jesus; or the God and Father of Christ. The latter is the more correct rendering. This expression occurs frequently in the New Testament; see 2 Cor. 1: 3. 11: 31. Eph. 1: 3. 1 Pet. 1: 3. It means that God whom Jesus Christ acknowledged and served, and who stood to him in the relation of a Father.

(7) *Therefore receive ye one another, as Christ also hath received us, to the glory of God.* The word rendered *receive* has the same sense here that it has in ch. 14: 1. 'Take one another to yourselves, treat one another kindly, even as Christ has kindly taken us to himself.' The words *to the glory of God* may be connected with the first or second clause, or with both. 'Receive ye one another that God may be glorified;' or 'as Christ has received us in order that God might be glorified;' or, if referred to both clauses, the idea is, 'as the glory of God was illustrated and promoted by Christ's reception of us, so also will it be exhibited by our kind treatment of each other.' The first method seems most consistent with the context, as the object of the apostle is to enforce the duty of mutual forbearance among Christians, for which he suggests two

motives, the kindness of Christ towards us, and the promotion of the divine glory.

(8) *Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises* made *unto the fathers.* This verse follows as a confirmation or illustration of the preceding. *Now I say*, i. e. this I mean. The apostle intends to show how it was that Christ had *received* those to whom he wrote. He had come to minister to the Jews, v. 8, and also to cause the Gentiles to glorify God, v. 9 The expression *minister of the circumcision* means *a minister sent to the Jews*, as 'apostle of the Gentiles' means 'an apostle sent to the Gentiles.' *For the truth of God*, i. e. to maintain the truth of God in the accomplishment of the promises made to the fathers, as is immediately added. Christ then had exhibited the greatest condescension and kindness in coming not as a Lord or ruler, but as an humble minister to the Jews, to accomplish the gracious promises of God. As this kindness was not confined to them, but as the Gentiles also were received into his kingdom and united with the Jews on equal terms, this example of Christ furnishes the strongest motives for the cultivation of mutual affection and unanimity.

(9) *And that the Gentiles might glorify God for* his *mercy.* The grammatical connexion of this sentence with the preceding is not very clear. The most probable explanation is that which makes *glorify* depend upon *I say*, in v. 8. 'I say that Jesus Christ became a minister to the Jews, *and I say* the Gentiles glorify God;' it was thus he *received* both. The *mercy* for which the Gentiles were to praise God, is obviously the great mercy of being received into the kingdom of Christ, and made partakers of all its blessings.

As it is written, I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name, Ps. 18: 49. In this and the following quotations from the Old Testament, the idea is more or less distinctly expressed, that true religion was to be extended to the Gentiles, and they therefore all include the promise of the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom to them as well as to the Jews.

(10) *And again, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.* This passage is commonly considered as quoted from Deut. 32: 43, where it is found in the Septuagint precisely as it stands here. The Hebrew has, "praise his people, O ye Gentiles," at least according to the common reading; according to some few MSS. the Hebrew expresses the same sense as the Septuagint. There is another difficulty in the way of supposing that this is a quotation from Deut. 32: 43; the sacred writer is not there speaking of the blessing of the Jews being extended to the Gentiles, but seems rather in the whole context to be denouncing vengeance on them as the enemies of God's people. Calvin and others, therefore, refer this citation to Ps. 67: 3, 5, where the sentiment is clearly expressed though not in precisely the same words.

(11) *And again praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all*

ye people. This passage is from Ps. 117: 1, and strictly to the apostle's purpose.

(12) *And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to rule over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust,* Isa. 11: 1, 10. This is an explicit prediction of the dominion of the Messiah over other nations besides the Jews. Here again the apostle follows the Septuagint, giving however the sense of the original Hebrew. The promise of the prophet is, that from the decayed and fallen house of David one should arise whose dominion should embrace all nations, and in whom Gentiles as well as Jews should trust. In the fulfilment of this prophecy Christ came, and preached salvation to those who were near and to those who were far off. As both classes had been thus kindly received by the condescending Saviour, and united into one community, they should recognise and love each other as brethren, laying aside all censoriousness and contempt, neither judging nor despising one another.

(13) *Now then the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.* Paul here, as in v. 5, concludes by praying that God would grant them the excellencies which it was their duty to possess. Thus constantly and intimately are the ideas of accountableness and dependence connected in the sacred scriptures. We are to work out our own salvation, because it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do, according to his good pleasure. *The God of hope*, i. e. God who is the author of that hope which it was predicted men should exercise in the root and offspring of Jesse.

Fill you with all joy and peace in believing, i. e. fill you with that joy and concord among yourselves, as well as peace of conscience and peace towards God, which are the results of genuine faith. *That ye may abound in hope.* The consequence of the enjoyment of the blessings, and of the exercise of the graces just referred to, would be an increase in the strength and joyfulness of their hope; *through the power of the Holy Ghost*, through whom all good is given and all good exercised.

CHAP. 15: 14—33.

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, 16 that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. 17 I have, therefore, whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. 18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, 19 through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of

the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: 21but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. 22For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. 23But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; 24whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*. 25But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. 27It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. 28When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. 29And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. 30Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me; 31that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; 32that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. 33Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

ANALYSIS.

The apostle, in the conclusion of his epistle, assures the Romans of his confidence in them, and that his motive for writing was not so much any idea of their peculiar deficiency, as the desire of putting them in mind of those things which they already knew, vs. 14, 15. This he was the rather entitled to do on account of his apostolic office conferred upon him by divine appointment, and confirmed by the signs and wonders and abundant success with which God had crowned his ministry, vs. 15, 16. He had sufficient ground of confidence in this respect, in the results of his own labours, without at all encroaching upon what belonged to others, for he had made it a rule not to preach where others had proclaimed the gospel, but to go to places where Christ was previously unknown, vs. 17—21. His labours had been such as hitherto to prevent the execution of his purpose to visit Rome. Now, however, he hoped to have tha pleasure on his way to Spain, as soon as he had accomplished his mission to Jerusalem with the contributions of the Christians in Macedonia and Achaia for the poor saints in Judea, vs. 22—28. Having acomplished this service, he hoped to visit Rome in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. In the mean time he begs an interest in their prayers, and commends them to the grace of God, vs. 29—33.

COMMENTARY.

(14) *And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.* Paul with his wonted modesty and mildness, apologizes, as it were, for the plainness and ardour of his exhortations. They were given from no want of confidence in the Roman Christians; and they were not an unwarrantable assumption of authority on his part. The former of these ideas he presents in this verse, and the latter in the next. *That ye also are full of goodness*, i. e. of kind and conciliatory feelings: and *filled with all knowledge*, i. e. abundantly instructed on these subjects, so as to be able to instruct or admonish each other. It was, therefore, no want of confidence in their disposition or ability to discharge their duties, that led him to write to them; his real motive he states in the next verse.

(15) *Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you, in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace given to me of God.* It was rather to remind than to instruct them that the apostle wrote thus freely. The words *in some sort* may qualify the words *more boldly*, 'I have written somewhat too boldly.' How striking the blandness and humility of the great apostle! The preceding exhortations and instructions, for which he thus apologizes, are full of affection and heavenly wisdom. What a reproof is this for the arrogant and denunciatory addresses which so often are given by men who think they have Paul for an example! These words (*in some sort*), however, may be connected with *I have written*; the sense would then be, 'I have written in part (i. e. in some parts of my epistle) very boldly.' When a man acts the part of a monitor he should not only perform the duty properly, but he should, on some ground, have a right to assume this office. Paul, therefore, says that he reminded the Romans of their duty, because he was entitled to do so in virtue of his apostolical character; *because of the grace given to me of God. Grace* here, as appears from the context, signifies the *apostleship*, which Paul represents as a favour; see ch. 1 : 5.

(16) *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.* This is the explanation of the *grace* given to him of God; it was the favour of being a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. Compare Eph. 3 : 8, "Unto me, who am the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." The word rendered *minister* means a public officer or servant; see ch. 13 : 6, where it is applied to the civil magistrate. It is, however, very frequently used (as is also the corresponding verb) of those who exercised the office of a priest, Deut. 10 : 8. Heb. 10 : 11. As the whole of this verse is figurative, Paul no doubt had this force of the word in his mind when he called himself a *minister*, a sacred officer of Jesus Christ; not a priest, in the proper sense of the term, for the ministers of the gospel are never so called in the New Testament, but merely in a

figurative sense. The sacrifice which they offer are the people, whom they are instrumental in bringing unto God.

Ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. This is the apostle's explanation of the preceding clause. 'He was appointed a minister of Christ to administer, or to act the part of a priest in reference to, the gospel, that is, to present the Gentiles as a holy sacrifice to God.' Paul, therefore, no more calls himself a priest, in the strict sense of the term, than he calls the Gentiles a sacrifice in the literal meaning of that word. Paul thus acted the part of a priest that *the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable.* The word *offering* sometimes means the act of oblation, sometimes the thing offered. Our translators have taken it here in the former sense; but this is not so suitable to the figure or the context. It was not Paul's act that was to be acceptable, or which was 'sanctified by the Holy Spirit.' The latter sense of the word, therefore, is to be preferred; and the meaning is, 'That the Gentiles, as a sacrifice, might be acceptable;' see ch. 12: 1. Phil. 2: 17. 2 Tim. 4: 6. *Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.* As the sacrifices were purified by water and other means, when prepared for the altar, so we are made fit for the service of God, rendered holy or acceptable, by the influences of the Holy Spirit. In this beautiful passage we see the nature of the only priesthood which belongs to the Christian ministry. It is not their office to make atonement for sin, or to offer a propitiatory sacrifice to God, but by the preaching of the gospel to bring men, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, to offer themselves as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

(17) *I have therefore whereof to glory, through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God.* That is, 'seeing I have received this office of God, and am appointed a minister of the gospel to the Gentiles, I have ground of confidence and rejoicing.' As, in the previous verses, Paul had asserted his divine appointment as an apostle, he shows, in this and the following verses, that the assertion was well founded, as God had crowned his labours with success, and sealed his ministry with signs and wonders. He, therefore, was entitled, as a minister of God, to exhort and admonish his brethren with the boldness and authority which he had used in this epistle. This ground of *boasting*, however, he had only *in* or *through Jesus Christ*, all was to be attributed to him; and it was in *reference to things pertaining to God*, i. e. the preaching and success of the gospel, not to his personal advantages or worldly distinctions.

(18, 19) In these verses the apostle explains more fully what he had intended by saying he had ground of confidence or boasting. It was that God had borne abundant testimony to his claims as a divinely commissioned preacher of the gospel; so that he had no need to refer to what others had done; he was satisfied to rest his claims on the results of his own labours, and the testimony of God. *For I will not dare to speak*

of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me. That is, 'I will not claim the credit due to others, or appeal to results which I have not been instrumental in effecting.' It is to be remarked that the apostle represents himself as merely an instrument in the hands of Christ for the conversion of men; the real efficiency he ascribes to the Redeemer. This passage, therefore, exhibits evidence that Paul regarded Christ as still exercising a controlling agency over the souls of men, and rendering effectual the labours of his faithful ministers. Such power the sacred writers never attribute to any being but God. *To make the Gentiles obedient*, i. e. to the gospel; compare ch. 1: 5, where the same form of expression occurs. The obedience of which Paul speaks is the sincere obedience of the heart and life. This result he says Christ effected, through his instrumentality, *by word and deed*, not merely by truth, but also by those means which Christ employed to render the truth effectual. What is to be understood by this expression, or how the truth was rendered effectual, is explained in the next verse.

(19) *Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God*, i. e. by miracles, and by the influences of the Holy Ghost. This passage is, therefore, analogous to that in 1 Cor. 2: 4, "My speech and preaching was not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." That is, he relied for success, not on his own skill or eloquence, but on the powerful demonstration of the Spirit. This demonstration of the Spirit consisted partly in the miracles which he enabled the first preachers of the gospel to perform, and partly in the influence with which he attended the truth to the hearts and consciences of those that believed; see Gal. 3: 2—5. Heb. 2: 4.

So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. That is, I have been so aided and blessed of God, that throughout a most extensive region I have successfully preached the gospel. God had given his seal to Paul's apostleship by making him so abundantly useful. *I have fully preached* expresses, no doubt, the sense of the original, to bring the gospel (i. e. the preaching of it) to an end, to accomplish it thoroughly; see Col. 1: 25. In this wide circuit had the apostle preached, founding churches, and advancing the Redeemer's kingdom with such evidence of the divine co-operation, as to leave no ground of doubt that he was a divinely appointed minister of Christ.

(20, 21) In further confirmation of this point, Paul states that he had not acted the part of a pastor merely, but of an apostle or founder of the church, disseminating the gospel where it was before unknown, so that the evidence of his apostleship might be undeniable; compare 1 Cor. 9: 2, "If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of my apostleship are ye in the Lord;" and 2 Cor. 3: 2, 3, *Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation;* that is, 'I have been desirous

of not preaching where Christ was before known, but in such a way as to accomplish the prediction that those who had not heard should understand.' The motive which influenced him in taking this course was, *lest he should build upon another man's foundation.* This may mean either, lest I should appropriate to myself the result of other men's labours; or, lest I should act the part, not of an apostle (to which I was called), but of a simple pastor.

(21) *But, as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand.* That is, I acted in the spirit of the prediction, that Christ should be preached where he had not been known. It had been foretold in Isa. 52: 15, that Christ should be preached to the Gentiles, and to those who had never heard of his name; it was in accordance with this prediction that Paul acted. There is, however, no objection to considering this passage as merely an expression, in borrowed language, of the apostle's own ideas; the meaning then is, 'I endeavoured to preach the gospel not where Christ was named, but to cause those to see to whom he had not been announced, and those to understand who had not heard.' This is in accordance with the apostle's manner of using the language of the Old Testament; see ch. 10: 15, 18. But as, in this case, the passage cited is clearly a prediction, the first method of explanation should probably be preferred.

(22) *For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.* That is, his desire to make Christ known where he had not been named, had long prevented his intended journey to Rome, where he knew the gospel had already been preached.

(23) *But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you,* &c. The expression *having no more place,* in this connexion, would seem obviously to mean 'having no longer a place in these parts where Christ is not known.' This idea is included in the declaration that he had fully preached the gospel in all that region. Others take the word rendered *place* to signify *occasion, opportunity,* 'Having no longer an opportunity of preaching here;' see Acts 25: 16. Heb. 12: 17.

(24) *Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you; for I trust to see you on my journey, and to be brought in my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your* company. *Whensoever, as soon as;* 'As soon as I take my journey,' &c. Whether Paul ever accomplished his purpose of visiting Spain is a matter of doubt. There is no historical record of his having done so, either in the New Testament or in the early ecclesiastical writers; though most of those writers seem to have taken it for granted. His whole plan was probably deranged by the occurrences at Jerusalem, which led to his long imprisonment at Cesarea, and his being sent in bonds to Rome. *To be brought on my way;* the original word means, in the active voice, to attend any one on a journey for some distance, as an expression of kind-

ness and respect; and also to make provision for his journey; see Acts 15: 3. 20: 38. 1 Cor. 16: 6. 2 Cor. 1: 16.

(25) *But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints*, i. e. to supply the wants of the saints, distributing to them the contributions of the churches; see Heb. 6: 10; compare also Matt. 8: 15. Mark 1: 31. Luke 4: 39, in which places the word signifies *to set foot before any one;* and, hence, more generally, *to supply his necessities.*

(26, 27) *For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.* Having mentioned this fact, the apostle immediately seizes the opportunity of showing the reasonableness and duty of making these contributions. This he does in such a way as not to detract from the credit due to the Grecian churches, while he shows that it was but a matter of justice to act as they had done. *It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are*, i. e. 'It pleased them *I say*, they did it voluntarily, yet it was but reasonable they should do it.' The ground of this statement is immediately added: *For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in carnal things.* 'If the Gentiles have received the greater good from the Jews, they may well be expected to contribute the lesser.' The word rendered *to minister* may have the general sense of *serving;* or it may be used with some allusion to the service being a sacred duty, a kind of offering which is acceptable to God.

(28) *When, therefore, I have done this, and sealed unto them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.* The word *sealed* appears here to be used figuratively, 'When I have *safely delivered* this fruit to them.' Commentators compare the use of the Latin words *consignare, consignatio*, and of the English word *consign.*

(29) *And I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.* The *fulness of the blessing* means the abundant blessing. Paul was persuaded that God, who had so richly crowned his labours in other places, would cause his visit to Rome to be attended by those abundant blessings which the gospel of Christ is adapted to produce. He had, in ch. 1: 11, expressed his desire to visit the Roman Christians, that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift, to the end that they might be established.

(30) *Now I beseech you, brethren, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in* your *prayers to God for me.* As the apostle was not immediately to see them, and knew that he would, in the mean time, be exposed to many dangers, he earnestly begged them to aid him with their prayers. He enforces this request by the tenderest considerations; *for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake*, i. e. out of regard to the Lord Jesus; 'Whatever regard you have for him, and whatever desire to see his cause prosper in which I am engaged, let it induce you to pray for me.' *And for the love of the Spirit*, i. e. 'for that love of which the Holy Spirit is the author, and by which

he binds the hearts of Christians together, I beseech you,' &c. He appeals, therefore, not only to their love of Christ, but to their love for himself as a fellow Christian. *That ye strive together with me*, i. e. that ye aid me in my conflict by taking part in it. This they were to do by their prayers.

(31) *That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea.* There are three objects for which he particularly wished them to pray, his safety, the successful issue of his mission, and that he might come to them with joy. How much reason Paul had to dread the violence of the unbelieving Jews, is evident from the history given of this visit to Jerusalem, in the Acts of the Apostles. They endeavoured to destroy his life, accused him to the Roman governor, and effected his imprisonment for two years in Cesarea, whence he was sent in chains to Rome. Nor were his apprehensions confined to the unbelieving Jews; he knew that even the Christians there, from their narrowminded prejudices against him as a preacher to the Gentiles, and as the advocate of the liberty of Christians from the yoke of the Mosaic law, were greatly imbittered against him. He, therefore, begs the Roman believers to pray *that the service which* (he had) *for Jerusalem* might *be accepted of the saints.* The words *service which I have*, &c. means *the contribution which I carry to Jerusalem;* see the use of this word in 2 Cor. 8: 4. 9: 1, 13. Paul laboured for those whom he knew regarded him with little favour; he calls them *saints*, recognises their Christian character, notwithstanding their unkindness, and urges his brethren to pray that they might be willing to accept of kindness at his hands.

(32) *That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and that I may with you be refreshed.* These words may depend upon the former part of the preceding verse, 'Pray that I may come;' or, upon the latter part, 'Pray that I may be delivered from the Jews, and my contributions be accepted, so that I may come with joy,' &c. *By the will of God*, i. e. by the permission and favour of God. Paul seemed to look forward to his interview with the Christians at Rome, as a season of relief from conflict and labour. In Jerusalem he was beset by unbelieving Jews, and harassed by Judaizing Christians; in most other places he was burdened with the care of the churches; but at Rome, which he looked upon as a resting-place rather than a field of labour, he hoped to gather strength for the prosecution of his apostolic labours in still more distant lands.

(33) *Now the peace of God* be *with you all.* As he begged them to pray for him, so he prays for them. It is a prayer of one petition; so full of meaning, however, that no other need be added. *The peace of God*, that peace which God gives, includes all the mercies necessary for the perfect blessedness of the soul.

DOCTRINES.

1. The sacred scriptures are designed for men in all ages of the world, nd the the great source of religious knowledge and consolation, v. 4.

2. The moral excellencies which we are justly required to attain, and the consolations which we are commanded to seek in the use of appropriate means, are still the gifts of God. There is, therefore, no inconsistency between the doctrines of free agency and dependence, vs. 5, 13.

3. Those are to be received and treated as Christians whom Christ himself has received. Men have no right to make terms of communion which Christ has not made, v. 7.

4. There is no distinction under the gospel between the Jew and Gentile; Christ has received both classes upon the same terms and to the same privileges, vs. 8—12.

5. The quotation of the predictions of the Old Testament by the sacred writers of the New, and the application of them in proof of their doctrines, involves an acknowledgment of the divine authority of the ancient prophets. And as these predictions are quoted indiscriminately from all parts of the Old Testament, it is evident that the apostles believed in the inspiration of all the books included in the sacred canon by the Jews, vs. 9—12.

6. Christian ministers are not priests, i. e. they are not appointed to "offer gifts and sacrifices for sins." It is no part of their work to make atonement for the people; this Christ has done by the one offering up of himself, whereby he has for ever perfected them that are sanctified, v. 16.

7. The truth of the gospel has been confirmed by God, through mighty signs and wonders and the power of the Holy Ghost. Infidelity, therefore, is a disbelief of the testimony of God. When God has given satisfactory evidence of the mission of his servants, the sin of unbelief is not relieved by the denial that the evidence is satisfactory. If the gospel is true, therefore, infidelity will be found not merely to be a mistake, but a crime, v. 19.

8. The success of a minister in winning souls to Christ may be fairly appealed to as evidence that he preaches the truth. It is, when clearly ascertained, as decided an evidence as the performance of a miracle; because it is as really the result of a divine agency. This, however, like all other evidence, to be of any value, must be carefully examined and faithfully applied. The success may be real, and the evidence decisive, but it may be applied improperly. The same man may preach (and doubtless every uninspired man does preach) both truth and error; God may sanction and bless the truth, and men may appeal to this blessing in support of the error. This is often done. Success, therefore, is of itself a very difficult test for us to apply; and must ever be held subject to the authority of the Scriptures. Nothing can prove that to be true which the Bible pronounces to be false, vs. 18, 19.

9. Prayer (and even intercessory prayer) has a real and important efficacy; not merely in its influence on the mind of him who offers it, but also in securing the blessings for which we pray. Paul directed the Roman Christians to pray for the exercise of the divine providence in pro-

tecting him from danger, and for the Holy Spirit to influence the minds of the brethren in Jerusalem. This he would not have done were such petitions of no avail, vs. 30, 31.

REMARKS.

1. The duty of a disinterested and kind regard to others in the exercise of our Christian liberty is one of the leading topics of this, as it is of the preceding chapter, vs. 1—13.

2. The desire to please others should be wisely directed, and spring from right motives. We should not please them to their own injury, nor from the wish to secure their favour; but for their good, that they may be edified, v. 2.

3. The character and conduct of Jesus Christ are at once the most perfect model of excellence and the most persuasive motive to obedience. The dignity of his person, the greatness of his condescension, the severity of his sufferings, the fervour of his love towards us, all combine to render his example effective in humbling us in view of our own short-comings, and in exciting us to walk even as he walked, vs. 4—13.

4. We should constantly resort to the Scriptures for instruction and consolation. They were written for this purpose; and we have no right to expect these blessings unless we use the means appointed for their attainment. As God, however, by the power of the Holy Ghost, works all good in us, we should rely neither on the excellence of the means nor the vigour and diligence of our own exertions, but on his blessing, which is to be sought by prayer, vs. 4, 5, 13.

5. The dissensions of Christians are dishonourable to God. They must be of one mind, i. e. sincerely and affectionately united, if they would glorify their Father in heaven, vs. 5—7.

6. A monitor or instructer should be full of goodness and knowledge. The human heart resists censoriousness, pride, and ill feeling in an admonisher; and is thrown into such a state by the exhibition of these evil dispositions, that the truth is little likely to do it any good. As oil poured on water smooths its surface, and renders it transparent; so does kindness calm the minds of men, and prepares them for the ready entrance of the truth. Besides these qualifications, he who admonishes others should be entitled thus to act. It is not necessary that this title should rest on his official station; but there should be superiority of some kind, of age, excellence, or knowledge, to give his admonitions due effect. Paul's peculiar modesty, humility, and mildness, should serve as an example to us, vs. 14, 15.

7. We should be careful not to build improperly on another man's foundation. Pastors and teachers must of course preach Christ where he had before been known; but they should not appropriate to themselves the results of the labours of others, or boast of things which Christ has not wrought by them. The man who reaps the harvest is not always he who sowed the seed. One plants and another waters, but God giveth the

increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase, vs. 19, 20.

8. It is the duty of those who have the means to contribute to the necessities of others, and especially to the wants of those from whom they themselves have received good, vs. 26, 27.

9. The fact that men are prejudiced against us is no reason why we should not do them good. The Jewish Christians were ready to denounce Paul, and to cast out his name as evil; yet he collected contributions for them, and was very solicitous that they should accept of his services, v. 31.

10. Danger is neither to be courted nor fled from; but encountered with humble trust in God, v. 31.

11. We should pray for others in such a way as really to enter into their trials and conflicts; and believe that our prayers, when sincere, are a real and great assistance to them. It is a great blessing to have an interest in the prayers of the righteous.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONTENTS.

In this concluding chapter Paul first commends to the church at Rome the deaconess Phebe, vs. 1, 2. He then sends his salutations to many members of the church, and other Christians who were then at Rome, vs. 3—16. He earnestly exhorts his brethren to avoid those who cause contentions; and, after commending their obedience, he prays for God's blessing upon them, vs. 17—21. Salutations from the apostle's companions, vs. 22—24. The concluding doxology, vs. 25—27.

CHAP. 16: 1—27.

[1]I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: [2]that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. [3]Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus: [4]who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. [5]Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my well beloved Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ. [6]Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. [7]Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. [8]Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. [9]Salute Urbane, our helper in

Christ, and Stachys my beloved. [10]Salute Apelles, approved in Christ Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household*. [11]Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus which are in the Lord. [12]Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. [13]Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. [14]Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. [15]Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. [16]Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you. [17]Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. [18]For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. [19]For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil. [20]And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen. [21]Timotheus my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. [22]I, Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord. [23]Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother. [24]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen. [25]Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, [26]but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: [27]to God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

COMMENTARY.

(1) *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.* Corinth, being situated on a narrow isthmus, had two ports, one towards Europe, and the other towards Asia. The latter was called Cenchrea, where a church had been organized, of which Phebe was *a servant*, i. e. *deaconess*. It appears that in the apostolic church elderly females were selected to attend upon the poor and sick of their own sex. Many ecclesiastical writers suppose there were two classes of these female officers; the one (corresponding, in some measure, in their duties to the elders) having the oversight of the conduct of the younger female Christians; and the other whose duty was to attend to the sick and the poor.

(2) *That ye receive her in the Lord.* The words *in the Lord* may be connected either with *receive*, 'receive *her* in a religious manner, and from religious motives;' or with the pronoun, *her in the Lord*, her as a

Christian. The apostle presents two considerations to enforce this exhortation; first, regard for their Christian character; and, secondly, the service which Phebe had rendered to others. *As becometh saints;* this expression at once describes the manner in which they ought to receive her, and suggests the motive for so doing. *And that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you.* They were not only to receive her with courtesy and affection, but to aid her in any way in which she required their assistance. The words *in whatsoever business* are to be taken very generally, *in whatever matter*, or in whatever respect. *For she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.* The word *succourer* means *a patroness, a benefactor;* it is a highly honourable title. As she had so frequently aided others, it was but reasonable that she should be assisted.

(3) *Salute Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus*, i. e. my fellow labourers in the promotion of the gospel. Aquila and Priscilla are mentioned in Acts 18: 2, as having left Rome in consequence of the edict of Claudius. After remaining at Ephesus a long time, it seems that they had returned to Rome, and were there when Paul wrote this letter, Acts 18: 18, 26. 1 Cor. 16: 19. 2 Tim. 4: 19.

(4) *Who have for my life laid down their own necks*, i. e. they exposed themselves to imminent peril to save me. On what occasion this was done is not recorded. *Unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.* Their courageous and disinterested conduct must have been generally known, and called forth the grateful acknowledgments of all the churches interested in the preservation of a life so precious as that of the apostle.

(5) *The church that is in their house.* These words are understood, by many of the Greek and modern commentators, to mean *their Christian family.* The most common and natural interpretation is, 'the church which is accustomed to assemble in their house;' see 1 Cor. 16: 19, where this same expression occurs in reference to Aquila and Priscilla. It is probable that, from his occupation as tent maker, he had better accommodations for the meetings of the church than most other Christians.

Salute my well beloved Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ. This passage is not irreconcilable with 1 Cor. 16: 15, "Ye know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia;" for Epenetus may have belonged to this family. So many of the oldest MSS. and versions, however, read *Asia* instead of *Achaia* in this verse, that the great majority of editors have adopted that reading. This, of course, removes even the appearance of contradiction.

(6, 7) *Greet Mary; who bestowed much labour upon us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners.* It is very doubtful whether Junia be the name of a man or of a woman, as the form in which it occurs (Ἰουνίαν) admits of either explanation. If a man's ame, it is Junias; if a woman's, it is Junia. It is commonly taken as a

female name, and the person intended is supposed to have been the wife or sister of Andronicus. *My kinsmen*, i. e. relatives, and not merely of the same nation; at least there seems no sufficient reason for taking the word in this latter general sense. *Fellow prisoners.* Paul, in 2 Cor. 11: 23, when enumerating his labours, says, "In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft," &c. He was, therefore, often in bonds (Clemens Romanus, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, sec. 5, says seven times); he may, therefore, have had numerous fellow prisoners. *Who are of note among the apostles.* This may mean either, they were distinguished apostles; or, they were highly respected by the apostles. The latter is most probably the correct interpretation, 1. Because the word *apostle*, unless connected with some other word, as in the phrase "messengers (apostles) of the churches," is very rarely applied in the New Testament to any other than the original messengers of Jesus Christ. The word has a fixed meaning, from which we should not depart without special reason. 2. Because the article, among *the* apostles, seems to point out the definite well-known class of persons almost exclusively so called. 3. The original, of course, admits this interpretation; it is the simple meaning of the words. *Who also were in Christ before me*, i. e. who were Christians before me.

(8—15) *My beloved in the Lord.* The preposition *in* here, as frequently elsewhere, points out the relation or respect in which the word to which it refers is to be understood; *brother beloved both in the flesh and in the Lord*, Phil. 5: 16, both in reference to our external relations, and our relation to the Lord. And thus in the following, v. 9, *our helper in Christ*, i. e. as it regards Christ; v. 10, *approved in Christ*, i. e. in his relation to Christ; an approved or tried Christian; v. 12, *who labour in the Lord*; and, *which laboured much in the Lord*, i. e. who, as it regards the Lord, laboured much; it was a Christian or religious service. The names *Tryphena*, *Tryphosa*, and *Persis* are all feminine. The last is commonly supposed to indicate the native country of the person who bore it, as it was not unusual to name persons from the place of their origin, as *Mysa*, *Syria*, *Lydia*, *Andria*, &c.; such names, however, soon became common, and were given without any reference to the birth-place of those who received them. *Chosen in the Lord*, i. e. either one chosen by the Lord; or, as is most probable in this connexion, *chosen* (i. e. approved, precious; see 1 Pet. 2: 4), in his relation to the Lord, as a Christian.

(16) *Salute one another with a holy kiss.* Reference to this custom is made also in 1 Cor. 16: 20. 1 Thess. 5: 26. 1 Pet. 5: 14. It is supposed to have been of oriental origin, and continued for a long time in the early churches; after prayer, and especially before the celebration of the Lord's supper, the brethren saluting in this way the brethren, and the sisters the sisters. This salutation was expressive of mutual affection and equality before God.

(17) *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions*

and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. While he urges them to the kind reception of all faithful ministers and Christians, he enjoins upon them to have nothing to do with those who cause divisions and offences. There were probably two evils in the apostle's mind when he wrote this passage; the divisions occasioned by erroneous doctrines, and the offences or scandals occasioned by the evil conduct of the false teachers. Almost all the forms of error which distracted the early church, were intimately connected with practical evils of a moral character. This was the case, to a certain extent, with the Judaizers; who not only disturbed the church by insisting on the observance of the Mosaic law, but also pressed some of their doctrines to an immoral extreme. See 1 Cor. 5: 1—5. It was still more obviously the case with those errorists, infected with a false philosophy, who are described in Col. 2: 10—23. 1 Tim. 4: 1—8. These evils were equally opposed to the doctrines taught by the apostle. Those who caused these dissensions Paul commands Christians, first, *to mark*, i. e. to notice carefully, and not allow them to pursue their corrupting course unheeded; and, secondly, *to avoid*, i. e. to break off connexion with them.

(19) *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.* These men are to be avoided, because they are wicked and injurious. The description here given is applicable, in a greater degree, to errorists in all ages. They are not actuated by zeal for the Lord Jesus; they are selfish, if not sensual; and they are plausible and deceitful. Compare Phil. 3: 18, 19. 2 Tim. 3: 5, 6. The words rendered *good words* and *fair speeches* do not in this connexion materially differ. They express that plausible and flattering address by which false teachers are wont to secure an influence over the *simple*. The word *simple* signifies not merely *innocent*, but *unwary*, he who is liable to deception. (Prov. 14: 15, *the simple believe every thing.*)

(20) *For your obedience is come abroad unto all men*, &c. This clause admits of two interpretations; the word *obedience* may express either their *obedience to the gospel*, their faith (see ch. 1: 8), or their *obedient disposition*, their readiness to follow the instructions of their religious teachers. If the former meaning be adopted, the sense of the passage is this, 'Ye ought to be on your guard against these false teachers, for, since your character is so high, your faith being every where spoken of, it would be a great disgrace and evil to be led astray by them.' If the latter meaning be taken, the sense is, 'It is the more necessary that you should be on your guard against these false teachers, because your ready obedience to your divine teachers is so great and generally known. This, in itself, is commendable, but I would that you joined prudence with your docility.' This latter view is, on account of the concluding part of the verse, most probably the correct one; see 2 Cor. 10: 6. Phil. v. 21.

I am glad, therefore, on your behalf; but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. That is, 'Simplicity (an unsuspecting docility) is indeed good; but I would have you not only simple but prudent. You must not only avoid doing evil, but be careful that you do not suffer evil.' Grotius' explanation is peculiarly happy, 'so prudent as not to be deceived; and so good as not to deceive.' The word *simple* means *unmixed*, *pure*, and then *harmless*. 'Wise as to good, but simple as to evil;' or, 'wise so that good may result, and simple so that evil may not be done.' This latter is probably the meaning. Paul would have them so wise as to know how to take care of themselves; and yet harmless.

(20) *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.* As the evils produced by the false teachers were divisions and scandals, the apostle, in giving them the assurance of the effectual aid of God, calls him the *God of peace*, i. e. God who is the author of peace in the comprehensive scriptural sense of that term. *Shall bruise* is not a prayer, but a consolatory declaration that Satan should be trodden under foot. As Satan is constantly represented as "working in the children of disobedience," the evil done by them is sometimes referred to him as the instigator, and sometimes to the immediate agents who are his willing instruments. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.* This is a prayer for the favour and aid of Christ, and of course is an act of worship, and a recognition of the Saviour's divinity.

(21—24) These verses contain the salutations of the apostle's companions to the Roman Christians, and a repetition of the prayer just mentioned. *I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.* Tertius was Paul's amanuensis. The apostle seldom wrote his epistles with his own hand; hence he refers to the fact of having himself written the letter to the Galatians as something unusual; Gal. 6: 11, "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand." In order to authenticate his epistles, he generally wrote himself the salutation or benediction at the close; 1 Cor. 16: 21, "The salutation of *me* Paul, with mine own hand;" 2 Thess. 3: 17, "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand; which is the token in every epistle: so I write." *Gaius mine host, and of the whole church*, i. e. Gaius, who not only entertains me, but Christians generally; or, in whose house the congregation is accustomed to assemble. *Erastus the chamberlain of the city* (οἰκονόμος), the treasurer of the city, the *quæstor*.

(25—27) These verses contain the concluding doxology. *Now to him that is of power to establish you, according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery*, &c. *To him that is able to establish you*, i. e. to render you firm and constant, to keep you from falling. *According to my gospel.* The word rendered *according to* may be variously explained. It is by many taken for *in*, 'establish you in my gospel;' but this the proper meaning of the

words will hardly allow. 2. It may be rendered *agreeably to my gospel*, in such a manner as my gospel requires; or, 3. *Through*, i. e. by means of the gospel. The second interpretation is perhaps the best. *And the preaching of Jesus Christ.* This may mean either 'Christ's preaching;' or 'the preaching concerning Christ;' either interpretation gives a good sense, the gospel being both a proclamation by Christ, and concerning Christ. The apostle dwells upon this idea, and is led into a description and commendation of the gospel. *According to the revelation of the mystery.* These words may be considered as co-ordinate with the preceding clause; the sense then is, 'Who is able to establish you agreeably to (or through) my gospel, agreeably to (through) the revelation of the mystery,' &c. It is, however, more common and natural to consider this clause as subordinate and descriptive. 'The gospel is a revelation of the mystery which had been hid for ages.' The word *mystery*, according to the common scriptural sense of the term, does not mean something obscure or incomprehensible, but simply something previously unknown, and undiscoverable by human reason, and which, if known at all, must be known by a revelation from God; see ch. 11 : 25. According to this passage, Paul speaks of the gospel as something "which had been kept secret since the world began;" i. e. hidden from eternity in the divine Mind. It is not a system of human philosophy, or the result of human investigation, but it is a revelation of the purpose of God. Paul often presents the idea that the plan of redemption was formed from eternity, and is such as no eye could discover, and no heart conceive, 1 Cor. 2 : 7—9. Col. 1 : 26.

(26) *But is now made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets;* that is, 'this gospel or mystery, hidden from eternity, is now revealed; not now for the first time, indeed, since there are so many intimations of it in the prophecies of the Old Testament.' It is evident that the apostle adds the words *and by the scriptures of the prophets* to avoid having it supposed that he overlooked the fact that the plan of redemption was taught in the Old Testament; compare ch. 1 : 2. 3 : 21. *According to the command of the everlasting God*, that is, this gospel is now made manifest by command of God. Paul probably uses the expression *everlasting God*, because he had just before said that the gospel was hid from eternity. 'It is now revealed by that eternal Being in whose mind the wonderful plan was formed, and by whom alone it could be revealed.' *Made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.* 'Made known *among* all nations.' *For the obedience of faith*, i. e. that they should become obedient to the faith; see ch. 1 : 5. This gospel, so long concealed, or but partially revealed in the ancient prophets, is now, by the command of God, to be made known among all nations.

(27) *To the only wise God be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.* There is an ambiguity in the original which is not retained in our version. 'To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory for ever.' The construction adopted by our translators is perhaps

the one most generally approved. 'To him that is able to establish you' to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory.' In this case the relative *to whom*, in v. 27, is pleonastic. Others explain the passage thus, 'To the only wise God, made known through Jesus Christ, to whom (i. e. Christ) be glory for ever.' The former construction appears the more natural. As Paul often calls the gospel the "wisdom of God" in contrast with the wisdom of men, he here, when speaking of the plan of redemption as the product of the divine Mind, and intended for all nations, addresses his praises to its author as the ONLY WISE GOD, as that Being whose wisdom is so wonderfully displayed in the gospel, and in all his other works, that he alone can be considered truly wise.

REMARKS.

1. It is the duty of Christians to receive kindly their brethren, and to aid them in every way within their power, and to do this from religious motives, and in a religious manner; as becometh saints, vs. 1, 2.

2. The social relations in which Christians stand to each other as relatives, countrymen, friends, should not be allowed to give character to their feelings and conduct, to the exclusion of the more important relation which they bear to Christ. It is as friends, helpers, fellow labourers in the Lord, that they are to be recognised; they are to be received in the Lord; our common connexion with Christ is ever to be borne in mind, and made to modify all our feelings and conduct, vs. 3—12.

2. From the beginning females have taken an active and important part in the promotion of religion. They seem more than others to have contributed to Christ of their substance; they were his most faithful attendants, 'last at the cross, and first at the sepulchre;' Phebe was a servant of the church, a succourer of Paul and of many others; Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis laboured much in the Lord, vs. 1, 2, 3, 6, 12.

4. It does not follow, because a custom prevailed in the early churches, and received the sanction of the apostles, that we are obliged to follow it. These customs often arose out of local circumstances and previous habits, or were merely conventional modes of expressing certain feelings, and were never intended to be made universally obligatory. As it was common in the east (and is so, to a great extent, at present, not only there, but on the continent of Europe) to express affection and confidence by 'the kiss of peace,' Paul exhorts the Roman Christians to salute one another with a holy kiss; i. e. to manifest their Christian love to each other according to the mode to which they were accustomed. The exercise and manifestation of the feeling, but not the mode of its expression, are obligatory on us. This is but one example; there are many other things connected with the manner of conducting public worship, and with the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, common in the apostolic churches, which have gone out of use. Christianity is a living principle, and was never intended to be confined to one unvarying set of forms, v. 16.

5. It is the duty of Christians to be constantly watchful over the peace and purity of the church, and not to allow those who cause divisions and scandals, by departing from the true doctrines, to pursue their course unnoticed. With all such we should break off every connexion which either sanctions their opinions and conduct, or gives them facilities for effecting evil, v. 17.

6. False teachers have ever abounded in the church. All the apostles were called upon earnestly to oppose them. Witness the epistles of Paul, John, Peter, and James. No one of the apostolical epistles is silent upon this subject. Good men may indeed hold erroneous doctrines; but the false teachers, the promoters of heresy and divisions, as a class, are characterized by Paul as not influenced by a desire to serve Christ, but as selfish in their aims, and plausible, flattering, and deceitful in their conduct, v. 18.

7. Christians should unite the harmlessness of the dove with the wisdom of the serpent. They should be careful neither to cause divisions or scandals themselves, nor allow others to deceive and beguile them into evil, v. 19.

8. However much the church may be distracted and troubled, error and its advocates cannot finally prevail. Satan is a conquered enemy with a lengthened chain; God will ultimately bruise him under the feet of his people, v. 20.

9. The stability which the church and every Christian should maintain is a steadfastness, not in forms or matters of human authority, but in the gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ. God alone is able thus to make his people stand; and, therefore, we should look to him and depend upon him for our own preservation, and the preservation of the church; and ascribe to him, and not to ourselves, all glory and thanks, vs. 25, 27.

10. The gospel is a mystery, i. e. a system of truth beyond the power of the human mind to discover, which God has revealed for our faith and obedience. It was formed from eternity in the divine Mind, revealed by the prophets and apostles, and the preaching of Jesus Christ; and is by the command of God to be made known to all nations, vs. 25, 26.

11. God alone is wise. He charges his angels with folly; and the wisdom of men is foolishness with him. To God, therefore, the profoundest reverence and the most implicit submission are due. Men should not presume to call in question what he has revealed, or consider themselves competent to sit in judgment on the truth of his declarations, or the wisdom of his plans. To GOD ONLY WISE, BE GLORY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST FOR EVER. AMEN.

The subscriptions to this and the other epistles were not added by the sacred writers, but appended by some later and unknown persons. This is evident, 1. Because it cannot be supposed that the apostles would thus formally state (as in this case) what those to whom their letters were addressed must have already

known. The Romans had no need to be informed that this epistle was sent by Phebe, if she actually delivered it to them. 2. They are frequently incorrect, and at times contradict the statements made in the epistles to which they are appended. Thus the subscription to the first Epistle to the Corinthians states that it was written from Philippi, whereas Paul, ch. 16: 8, speaks of himself as being in Ephesus when he was writing. 3. They are either left out entirely by the oldest and best manuscripts and versions, or appear in very different forms. In the present case many MSS. have no subscription at all; others simply, "To the Romans;" others, "To the Romans, written from Corinth;" others, "Written to the Romans from Corinth by Phebe;" &c. &c. These subscriptions, therefore, are of no other authority than as evidence of the opinion which prevailed, to a certain extent, at an early date as to the origin of the epistles to which they are attached. Unless confirmed from other sources they cannot be relied upon.

THE END.

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